SCHELLING

UNDERSTANDING GERMAN IDEALISM

MICHAEL TSARION

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by
Michael Tsarion

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DEDICATIONS

This book is dedicated to the memory of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Eduard von Hartmann, Jacob Bohme, Meister Eckhart, Nicholas Cusanus, George Berkeley, William Blake, Rudolf Steiner, Wilhelm Reich, Gustave Le Bon, Ayn Rand, Alvin Boyd Kuhn and Otto Rank.

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INTRODUCTION

Great things are done when men and mountains meet – William Blake

I first began studying academic philosophy at a community college in Belfast in 1987. Although I did not take the classes to matriculate, my interest in Western philosophy, which had always been sincere, was enhanced considerably. We were fortunate to have a captivating tutor, a very rare thing in Northern Ireland in those days. Unlike ordinary school we were permitted to wear our own clothes rather than uniforms and even allowed to go about the college smoking. It was a barely bearable experience, but *mission accomplished* I activated my little grey cells and learned many interesting things.

After taking the same class the following year, 1988, I left Belfast and moved back to the Bay Area California. Working deadbeat jobs I continued studying philosophy on my own, albeit on the quiet. It was not until 1993, when I first came across *Being and Time* by Martin Heidegger, that I experienced a major turning point in my intellectual life. Before that I had been upgrading my insight into the nature of our crazy world by devouring the works of Ayn Rand, and without doubt I am a committed Randian. Reading widely from numerous fields I became familiar with the work of Henri Bergson and was deeply inspired by the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. Finding out how much Heidegger was influenced by Rilke and other existentialist poets encouraged me to continue finding out more about the philosopher's ideas. Twenty years later I felt I had a grasp of what Heidegger and Rilke were thinking. Of course to study Heidegger means to study the whole of Western philosophy, and in so doing I was eventually able to penetrate more deeply into Hegel, Schelling and the German Idealists. Understanding Heidegger inevitably means asking what he found so flawed and reprehensible about other traditions. What was he critiquing in Scholasticism, Cartesianism, Rationalism, Metaphysics, Epistemology and Idealism? One is compelled and condemned to dart off in so many directions in order to make sense of his unique perspectives. Nevertheless it was well worth the twenty three years of committed effort.

Eventually I learned that Heidegger had a soft spot for the relatively unknown German Idealist Friedrich Schelling. This is not surprising given that some of Heidegger's key ideas on the nature of Being come directly from Schelling's work entitled *First Outline on a System of*

Nature. Few know that in 1936 at the University of Freiburg, Heidedgger gave a scintillating series of lectures on his German predecessor. These courses and his book *Schelling's Treatise: On the Essence of Human Freedom,* are responsible for awakening some interest in the lesser known genius.

I also came to Schelling through a study of Hegel. Personally I enjoy contemplating the ideas of both men, and it was intriguing to discover their debt to German mystics of bygone ages, such as Jacob Bohme, Meister Eckhart and Nicholas Cusanus. Having studied the writings of William Blake since I was five years old, I was more than eager to read anything that helped explicate the great English mystic. It is known that Blake read Bohme and was influenced by the sage's enigmatic ideas. I felt sure that Blake, for all his originality and iconoclasm, would have been in agreement with many perspectives of Schelling and Hegel.

More recently I find it odd and contemptible that Schelling's name is habitually omitted by the fledgling scientific cadre of "Religious Naturalists" or "Naturalistic Pantheists," as they tend to call themselves. I support their work, and am myself a Mystical Naturalist. I certainly believe that Religious Naturalism will eventually emerge as a major paradigm and school in science, particularly after the dominant materialist-physicalist approaches crash to the ground under their own weight, as they are now doing. The growing interest in the dynamic discoveries of Hannes Alfven, David Bohm, Richard Tarnas, Arthur Koestler, Ken Wilber, Michael Talbot, Bruce Lipton, Stuart Hameroff, Rupert Sheldrake, Iain McGilchrist, and the Religious Naturalists, is bound to influence up and coming young scientists, encouraging them to reject materialism and be receptive to new paradigms about spirituality, cosmos, existence, identity, will, freedom, nature, culture and morality. However, as said, the champions and exponents of sensible science *must* be reminded to acknowledge their great intellectual predecessors, and recognize that none of their own ideas are new. Blake, Goethe, Steiner, Berkeley, Hegel, Schelling and Whitehead must be correctly and respectfully honored as we move forward to bring forth a saner and more holistic understanding of reality.

My chagrin at the unbearable omissions in recent books by Religious Naturalists spurred me to correct the egregious problem by writing this book. It is intended as an introduction to Schelling and German Idealism, but also honors the work of Bohme, Blake, Berkeley, Rank, Reich, Whitehead, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and other savants of the past with profound ideas that must never be neglected, misinterpreted

or repackaged by crafty newbies jostling for personal intellectual acclaim.

Schelling is perhaps the least remembered and read major Western philosopher. I therefore hope my book encourages readers to delve into his works with interest and respect. In accord with their intellectual, mystical and romantic predecessors, Schelling and Hegel offer the most coherent proofs for the existence of Spirit. They were not men of belief but of direct *Knowledge,* and the world's sincere seekers of Truth must return to imbibe their wisdom, heedless of the cacophony of corrupt disingenuous voices from all sides which attempt to belittle and dismiss their elegant and profound philosophies.

TRUTH AGAINST THE WORLD

CHAPTER ONE
The Problem of Idealism

Truth in philosophy means that concept and external reality correspond – Georg Hegel

The man who believes all that exists is the product of consciousness is referred to as an Idealist. However, we might ask if the Idealist's idea is for the most part a presumption, perhaps without strong foundation. After all, an Idealist supposes that because he, as a human, *thinks* and has consciousness, all he sees must be an emanation of consciousness. But surely this is pure anthropomorphism and metaphysicalization. It is certainly rather arrogant and grandiose, since the Idealist does not suppose the consciousness of which he is intimately aware to be omnipotent. He will admit, surely, that his consciousness is limited, perhaps extremely so. Indeed he will admit to the existence of an "unconscious" hemisphere which conscious processes cannot penetrate. Given that this is so, are we to take it that the limited consciousness known to humans is the author of reality? Surely not. We'd expect that kind of consciousness to be far more potent. The Idealist agrees and tells us about the *Supreme Being* – the *Supreme Thinker* who thinks great thoughts. Dazzled, we rarely ask whether this thinker's consciousness is also limited. Does his existence precede time and the beginning of the universe? Is he the origin of evil as well as of good? Does he possess an "unconscious" self? Is he here with us in his creation? Did he return somewhere else after setting the cogs of the universe in motion? Or does he come and go at a whim? Is He a *She?*

As to his personality, Schelling says that yes, astonishingly, the mind of God does have an "unconscious" hemisphere. Following on from mystics such as Jacob Bohme, Schelling had no difficulty understanding that God, like man, has a dark side to his being. Indeed Schelling intelligently realized that it is not correct to suppose that any kind of consciousness, whether in man, nature or God, is omnipotent and without a level of imperfection or tension. Of course Schelling is still supposing that nature and God have what man possesses. To escape the problem of anthropomorphism he remains open to the idea that consciousness as man knows and has it, is not necessarily consciousness as nature and God know and have it. But is this simply a convenient ruse? Does it make the Idealist's argument stronger to propose a different, more powerful kind of consciousness than the limited kind known to us? And will this dualistic theory

sufficiently explain anything?

But perhaps this kind of rarefied consciousness does indeed exist and function in the way Idealists such as Schelling believe. After all, the universe did not come into existence because of *human* thought. Moreover, thought as we experience it is incapable of knowing if something seen ceases to exist if thought isn't there to apprehend it. What we know is that things *appear* to be there when thought apprehends them. The next step for Idealists is to deem thought the author of all it surveys. And so we have God as thinker and supreme creator. In making us, he extended a measure of his own consciousness and understanding. However, the glitch is that we conceive of our own kind of thinking as higher in kind to that of animals and entities in the world; a world taken as real because we believe God created it by way of his supernal consciousness.

Despite metaphysical explanations for reality, and despite the barrage of counter-arguments against Idealism, the fact is that mind can't step outside itself. When we say we know ourselves as thinking beings, we often forget that it is thought itself that, by way of self-reflexivity, establishes its own sovereignty. We use reason to validate reason, and even when we doubt our intellects, we do so *with* intellect. So there is apparently no way out of the enclosure of consciousness as we know and experience it. Consequently, although we are certain that we think, we are not so certain whether other entities (rocks, trees, plants, clouds, water, minerals, etc) think or have any kind of consciousness as we conceive and experience it. In other words, a divide exists between man and the world. In order to cross it, Idealists are bound to establish a *human-like* consciousness as author of all. This is obviously because our minds are able to envision a more elevated and powerful mind capable of greater feats of thinking, creativity and manifestation. The reasons why we are inclined to do this are of great interest and importance. In any case, the first great German Idealist, Johann Fichte, did position the Self at the center of reality and to all intents and purposes made human consciousness the origin of all.

Non-Idealists don't regard the human mind as being responsible for the existence of things in the non-human, apparently non-conscious world. Therefore it is probable that those things have a conscious non-human creator. Since God is good, and would never deceive us, we take it that the world he made is, like us, absolutely real. This conception serves to explain reality for those metaphysicians and rationalists whose faith in the existence of God is resolute and inviolable. The theory only shakes if it turns out that their God isn't so good or perfect after all. Of course it crashes to the ground if God

doesn't exist.

However it does not end there. Once God's existence is taken for granted, we are left to explain *his* origins. After all, nothing exists in a vacuum. Some discernible thing or force must *precede* each thing that exists. Apparently it's a matter of cause and effect, and there's no easily conceived alternative, at least on the non-quantum level. So what existed *before* God? Schelling had the best answer in the world for this age-old problem, which I explore later. His ideas took Idealism and metaphysics to a new level, and his insights are supported by the latest scientific discoveries concerning the workings of time, light, being and those infamous subatomic quanta.

Turning from God to nature, we find that the average philosopher's attitude toward nature has traditionally been patently wrongheaded. Most Idealists and Rationalists, from Descartes, Kant and Fichte onwards, devalue nature or think of it as relatively insignificant to their metaphysical or epistemological conceptions. It certainly is not considered the creator of all. This was not the case for Schelling mind you. His almost pantheistic ideas raise the ontological status of nature to a high level. After all, as he well knew, thought is an attribute of mind. But mind is an attribute of body which is in turn a product or emanation of nature, which does not *think* in a recognizably human manner. Given that nature is a conscious being, its form of consciousness is apparently vexatiously unknowable to human consciousness. Why is this? If consciousness is all, why is human consciousness unable to commune with natural consciousness in a direct, clear way? If God created man and nature, why don't the two dialogue openly and without mystery? Schelling answers saying that the spirit of nature works on an unconscious level, whereas humans are conscious as well as unconscious beings. He believed that on an unconscious level, man and nature are in communication and are one. Schelling and Hegel were intent on understanding reality and consciousness on the deepest level. What they found profoundly alters human understanding, even though their ideas have been largely misinterpreted and ignored.

Obviously the mind recognizes an external natural world from which it learns in many ways. For some our consciousness is clearly derivative of worldly and social existence. Indeed, it seems sensible to reject religious notions that speak of human consciousness originating *before* or *beyond* nature. For Schelling, it makes more philosophical sense to explain human consciousness as the result of nature's mysterious negentropic processes, as odd as the idea seems at first. After all, as said, the body is certainly nature's creation. No mind has

been discovered functioning outside a body. So even though the complete process isn't fully known, it appears logical to regard nature as the ground of body *and* consciousness. Such an idea was expounded in detail by the great Alfred North Whitehead whose theories were largely based on Schelling's ideas about Organicism. As far as Schelling was concerned, we must dispense with false notions concerning nature. Nature was not, as most theists, deists and pandeists suppose, set in motion by God once-upon-a-time, to continue blindly and mechanically working down through millennia. The constituents of nature – light, gravity, electricity, magnetism, etc – are as alive and "conscious" as human beings. Our failure to grasp this fact is due to indoctrination and chronic insensitivity.

In this way Schelling and Hegel broadened their versions of Idealistic philosophy to offer intriguing reasons for the advent of both consciousness and Self-consciousness. They believed that both nature and God (Geist, Spirit, Logos) are moving toward Self-realization in a long august process culminating in a final moment of absolute revelation. We know and experience this process as time or history. More vitally, we as conscious, willful, desiring beings are key to the success of the process. We are not *in* time, we *are* time. In other words we are the means by which God and nature, as different manifestations of Spirit, become conscious of themselves. For this reason it is unsustainable to denigrate nature as if, as Descartes thought, it is something estranged from mind. On the contrary, without nature mind cannot come to be. This is why the moment a mind becomes Self-conscious it is thereafter aware of the existence of nature. Clearly nature is the *co-creator* of consciousness and the means by which Spirit gives rise to Self-conscious beings. Nature is the means by which beings come to autonomy and Self-knowledge. As we will see later, this teleological process intimately involving nature accounts for our *aesthetic sensibility* – our love and awe of nature's mystery and beauty.

> *To the Transcendental Philosophy, Nature is nothing but the organ of self-consciousness, and everything in Nature is only necessary because only through such a Nature can self-consciousness be achieved* – Schelling

In any case, to say that we can only be sure of our own existence is counter-intuitive and plain silly. The world obviously exists. If it didn't we would not be able to form doubts and pose questions as to its existence or non-existence. Indeed, we would not exist to do anything of the sort. With no body there can be no mind to think. And bodies are most definitely creations of nature's intelligence as well as being

objects in the world. The question of importance concerns whether the kind of consciousness that gives rise to the world of nature is of the same kind and quality as that which we possess and experience. Although we are inclined to take this as a given, strangely it is not being confirmed by the latest scientific investigations into nature's nature. In any case, whatever we encounter in any realm – whether mental or physical, real or virtual – can only either be conscious or non-conscious. This goes for the world of appearances and quantum dimensions as well. The crucial variable for conscious beings concerns the *quality* of their consciousness. And no other person can enhance the quality of one's existence. It is all down to one's own conscience and will.

It is primarily important for us to acknowledge that our bodies and brains are objects in the world in the same way as other entities are. If we take our bodies for real perceivable things, we are bound to do so with everything else that exists. Which is sensible given that they appear to be there because we are there to see them. In other words, they show up for us because of our own light, the light of being. As the philosopher Martin Heidegger said, we also show up because of the world's light. And so we can take the world to be there, since its reality imparts to us existential reality. And that which shows up in the light of being transcends the mind and is absolutely real. The mind is merely one phenomenon of many showing up in the light of being. In this way we can take everything around us to be absolutely real rather than as phantoms of the mind. To negate this logic is to deny the existence of physical and mental reality, which is illogical. To think at all, about anything, means to be (or to exist) *first.* It is to be a mind *in a body in a world.* This is why we've not yet found a mind operating without a fleshy body, even though we habitually attribute a mind to a disembodied God. It's not a very cogent idea. A Pantheist will have none of it. For him God is embodied right before our eyes, as well as behind them. He is both nature and the Self. For the Pantheist the process of scientific discovery is simply the process by which man learns more about his own being as well as about the nature of nature. The materialist doesn't operate on this level because his idea about himself is deviant. For him nature is a blind mechanism. This is because he wishes to mechanize his world, as well as the people in it. He mechanizes his own consciousness and is therefore incapable of seeing nature as a vital living being. He does not realize that his scientism is as unsustainable and empty as the religious man's supernaturalism.

We have established a disembodied anthropomorphic God to worship and seek, ignoring the fact that we must also sufficiently explain his

origin. We refuse to see the obvious – that we are God's origin. Our *minds* give rise to the supernatural God in order to explain the origin of humanity and nature. As said, it's not a very intelligent plan when all is said and done. This is why Schelling and Hegel were so determined to find more substantial proofs for the existence of God. It meant closely examining what mind is and does. How does Self-consciousness arise from consciousness and unconsciousness? What is thinking's *first* act? Is a mind moving *in* time, or is its own movement and progress the true origin of time? Is this the reason why there is such a phenomenon as "past, present and future?" It meant looking deeply and perceptively at the underlying "logic" of consciousness and teasing out its secrets. It meant being lucidly aware that consciousness is in charge of the process of delving into the mysteries of *itself*.

Jacob Bohme (1575-1624) was a German mystic whose ideas profoundly effected Schelling and Hegel. They adopted many of his key ideas in order to explain the true origin and nature of Spirit.

Some are inclined to think of reality as some kind of virtual hologram or projection, generated by minds or perhaps by some super-computer. Thinking along these lines doesn't get us very far. We are putting *ourselves* in the place of God and seeing ourselves as much more powerful mentally than we are normally wont to believe. This of course implies an act of self-deception. If we are truly that mentally powerful why don't we know and sense it? Why aren't we actively changing the world for the better? Why are we so actively destructive and cruel? Why don't we have answers to the innumerable questions we ask about reality? Why do we often live pain-filled lives and finally

die? Is it all part of the "program?" Have we programmed the pain, suffering, cruelty, injustice, corruption, error, folly *and* forgetfulness into the computer, so we remain trapped within it without an exit? What sense does that make, and what kind of creatures must we then really be?

Moreover, to accept this explanation means we would inevitably have to believe ourselves to be immortal since no time-bound finite being could possess the power to create reality, not even the illusion of it. No, as we can readily see, this explanation is not sound. We didn't create our own parents or theirs and did not create matter. Even if we hypothetically ponder whether our minds create the *illusion* of a universe in which we exist, we must answer why and how such an illusion serves the minds which make it seem real. It is exceedingly unlikely that a mind responsible for maintaining an illusion of this grandeur would at the same time allow us to doubt the origins of the reality it has manufactured. That instinct or impulse would simply not exist. In light of the fact that we are able to deeply ponder the reality we encounter, we see that such captivating accounts must be rejected.

Of course a man may not wish to regard himself as an emanation of nature. Clearly, most people are not interested in this concept. Despite the wisdom of Schelling, a man might complain that his supposed mother has not been overly caring toward him. She has not endowed him with enough speed to escape predators, or a skin thick enough to endure cold and rain. Man may not think highly of the theory that tells him he is nature made conscious. He may prefer to conjure a more agreeable creatrix and patron. He may prefer to think of a god in the form of Zeus, Jupiter or Jehovah. But as we said, he might conveniently overlook the question of his god's origins and omnipotence, piling on traits that derive from purely human conceptions.

And if mind is the creator of all – the real and unreal – it must also be the author of time. Well, no problem there. This is what Immanuel Kant's philosophy established apparently beyond all doubt. In effect, the future is when a mind becomes what it desires to be, and the past is when it conceived its desires. Along the way mind must frequently and perpetually discern what is true from what is false. But wait a moment, in order to determine the false the mind must already possess an idea of what is real. How can this be? If it is the creator of all then whatever is false is of mind's own creation. Why would falsity and illusion both be necessary creations of mind? Moreover, that which we take for reality today is often trashed tomorrow. Truth is not constant, regardless of what some are wont to believe. Problems

encountered by minds are solved *in time* because (as Rationalists and Idealists love to remind us) reason hones itself through time. That's quite right and obvious. Time appears to mark the stages of mind's journey toward wisdom. But again, if mind has created all it must surely already know all. Time must therefore itself be illusory. Strangely, this is what some Idealists believe. But if time is an illusion created by minds how can it be used to accurately mark the stages of a trial and error process by which we discern truth from falsity? Is it really marking the process of developing reason as Hegel and Schelling believed? Perhaps time delineates a different process. Maybe it marks the stages of man the perpetual and compulsive seeker. Perhaps ends and goals are not important at all. Maybe man is, as Nietzsche presented him, a sedulous seeker who tires of his goal the minute he attains it. As the artist M. C. Escher remarked *...the painting I'm working on now is all that matters to me. But the moment it is complete, it loses its significance.* In this sense time marks moments in an endless process of creation, destruction and recreation.

To see mind as the endless labyrinth-maker makes a lot of sense. Given that mind blinds itself to the facts of its origin, preferring to remain incarcerated in chains of its own making, it seeks many escapes. Many methods are adopted to enable consciousness to escape consciousness. These attempts are witnessed all around us. All manner of practice has been tried, and all manner of substance imbibed for just this purpose. There are countless "spiritual" paths, teachings and traditions designed to change men from what they take themselves to be one day to something else they seek to become the next. For all this ardor we see that what is desired by a mind is not always attained by a mind.

So we ask again, is man fundamentally a compulsive seeker ultimately disinterested as to whether ends are reached or not? Has the mind become a problem *maker* for the sake of having something to do; something to distract it from remembering its existential quandary? Are mysteries manufactured? Are questions concerning God's nature and the mystery of the origins of the universe legitimate and worth pursuing? Or are they mind-forged and worthless when all is said and done? And will minds one day tire of the game? Will the act of constant seeking finally end apocalyptically? Or will something happen to quieten the mind of man in another way, as yet unknown?

Man is certainly the "seeker" in both physical and mental terms. But are we really goal-oriented, or are our objectives simply ruses to continue the everlasting search? Are we interested in reaching the finishing line or with feeling the wind in our hair? Why are we immediately discontented after achieving a desired end? Do we contemplate what this restlessness means for the nature of Spirit in the Schellingean-Hegelian sense?

Alternatively, is the mind's true desire to end all seeking and questioning? It does not seem so. Seeking seems to be enjoyed for its own sake, and one does it despite the obstacles, trials and errors that often arise on this or that quest. So far man remains the eternal seeker, as Nietzsche portrayed him. From this standpoint it might be theorized that mind is indeed the author of all. Perhaps mind has created everything we know; a creation so vast, varied and artful that we can, as humans, continuing seeking forever the answers to this or that mystery. In this view we see that mind and God are one, as Idealists maintain, and that mind does indeed move toward higher stages of rationality and Self-awareness. Temporally, the future is the time when this epiphany is destined to occur, and the past is the

memory of each and every previous stage, each a vital foundation to successive stages in the unfolding and continuing entelechy. In fact the word "mind" originally denoted a process. It is a verb *not* a noun.

This fact was not lost on the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, who believed that matter does not exist and that everything in existence, human and non-human, is in a state of continual everlasting *experience* and change. For Whitehead the idea of stasis and separate bits of matter floating in the aether were aberrant ideas conjured by a reason which, after centuries of indoctrination, finds itself unable to see reality for what it is. Nothing new here though. This colossal mental error was addressed earlier by the eighteenth century English painter and poet William Blake who labored to shake humanity out of its "Newtonian Sleep."

Of course a process involves time. More certainly, we see that time as we normally experience it is an epiphenomenon of desire, as many ancient sages emphasized. The person we take ourselves to be today desires to be something or other tomorrow. And the process between these two projections sets mental time in motion. It's a different version of time than that which exists for the earth and its forms and for our bodies. Perhaps that type of time – natural or existential time – might be best described in Blakean terms as "Eternity." In any case mental time is illusory because the desire to be someone tomorrow is for the most part not the conception of an authentic being. More often than not it is the conception of a pseudo-self responding to the will of parents and society. In this case the desire is not a true expression of the Imperial Self. Nevertheless it becomes the petrol in the engine of the ego moving toward denouement. When we attain what we desire we usually find ourselves dissatisfied, and no wonder! Inevitably, we start a similar process and pursue another desire, never noticing the repetitive process involved. Sages refer to this often endless process figuratively as the Wheel of Karma. Stepping off the wheel entails seeing the illusion for what it is and ending it.

This escape wouldn't be possible if *within* our state of illusion a more originary intuition of Truth didn't exist; a sense that we are not living authentically. Without this intuition arising from our innermost depths we'd simply remain, like most people, forever chained to the Wheel of Karma. This implies of course that Truth accompanies us, despite our will, even into the darkest places, even when we are lost to ourselves. For sages such as Schelling, it is the "still small voice" emanating from the abyss of ancestral wisdom from which we as individuals emerge. In the Karmic Round – in vulgar or ontic time – the *present* moment is part of the illusion or self-deception, but is paradoxically also the

space in which the Voice of Truth attempts to subtly buttonhole us, re-directing us to the portal through which we escape the cage of inauthentic desire and vulgar time. And the escape works as long as we yield to the inner voice of conscience; a process made more difficult due to the mind's habitual clamor, not to mention the all-pervasive racket of the human world around us. Responding despite the difficulty means to return to ourselves as *Selves,* and begin noticing the *way* we do what we do. Embarking on this enterprise transforms us into completely different people, and opens many a previously locked door of understanding.

More optimistically, perhaps the mind is not completely chained with no hope of escape. After all, in order for something to be and know itself as a being, it must set itself off against that which is not itself. For mind the *other* is nature; the mirror-like background against which beings posit themselves. For Schelling and some other philosophers this means that nature is indeed conscious and willful. Otherwise there could be no real meaningful interplay between man and nature, no evolution of both. This relationship implies intimate commonality between the two. For Idealists that commonality is Reason. It is *Logos* – which is nothing less than the innate *order* of which both nature and man are emanations and embodiments. It is the means by which both man and nature commune and end their alienation. The Logos – the ancestral oracular Voice of Truth – is conscious in men but unconscious in nature. But it's only a matter of degree. The Schellingean Idealist maintains that consciousness (in the form of Reason/Logos/Order) is present in both man and nature. Disorder or evil arises when man forgets this fact or works egoically in blindness of the intimate rapport that exists between himself and nature. This forgetfulness is ultimately a choice. It is an act of self-deception that must cease.

Before man appeared on the scene, nature's "other" was God himself. According to Schelling and Hegel, nature is the theater and means of God's own process of Self-realization. It was an early manifestation of his innate desire to know *himself* as complete, a process which involved a splitting or bifurcation of Spirit. Two powerful currents or modes of consciousness took birth, one with a tendency to retract and remain static, and another with the will to progress and blend. Nature and man are the result of the latter trajectory. Although from one perspective the two forces might seem antagonistic and antithetical, they are each others reason for existence. Their tension and interactivity results in the development of nature and eventually of human consciousness.

Prior to the advent of nature, God's mirror was his own unconscious Self. This hemisphere from which God himself emerged is, according to Schelling, in perpetual shadow. Its nature is never completely fathomed, not even by God himself. Since this dark "ground" is innate to Spirit, its presence is to be intuited in everything that exists – God, Nature, Man. Jacob Bohme, who conceived this aspect of Idealist metaphysics, described this origin of origins as the "dark fire," although this conception of God as a dark and light, or hidden and revealed dyad, is first found in the earliest dynasties of ancient Egypt, with the Cult of Osiris. The important fact is that God's own Self-discovery corresponds with our own teleological process. For humans, consciousness is always the subject *and* object in the reflexive process of Self-discovery, and so it was with God. However, whereas our existence may be temporally circumscribed, God's Self-discovery is eternal. If there are beginnings and ends to the process they are epiphenomena of the *eternal* process that in actuality has no ultimate start or finish. As Bohme explained, the process is only nuanced by being subdivided into what might be called nighttime and daytime phases. As the Vedics wrote, whether the eye of God opens and closes, or whether the light of Spirit is shaded or effulgent, eternity remains eternity.

What existed before God himself became Self-conscious? Nature and man are the result of God rising to Self-consciousness. According to Jacob Bohme, before his awakening God was in a slumber-like state of unconsciousness. But this does not imply that there was "nothing" before God's awakening. There has never been a time *before* God, because even in his unconscious state he was still the source of all that existed. His sleep is not to be compared to that experienced by humans. What existed before God's awakening is unknowable. Nevertheless, we are wrong to think of God and time as having a beginning. It is Self-

consciousness that has a date of birth, not Spirit. This unique state of Self-consciousness would be possible to achieve without the non-self-conscious natural world as its theater or mirror. Without nature neither God nor man exists in a Self-conscious state.

Of course there is a simpler and perhaps sounder explanation for the origins and nature of consciousness than that offered by Idealists. Mind can be regarded simply as an *emanation of nature* – the most complex thing we know and can know. Consequently minds (not to mention bodies and brains), being derivative, are not able to penetrate the mystery of nature's infinitely complex origins which remain concealed. As Heraclitus understood, it is a mystery we are stuck with, but one that stands in front of each person in the plain light of day. This makes for a distinctly different kind of mystery than that troubling most metaphysicians. It's a mystery as yet unsolved but it's not abstract. Everything in and of nature lies before our *senses.* Everything about and of God is apparently not so proximate and apprehensible. Which means that the manner in which our scientific curiosity about nature and existence kick-started was different from the manner in which our curiosity about God's existence started. We did not initiate our search for God in the same way as we began searching for nature's secrets. It was the senses not reason that inspired scientific curiosity, whereas it was reason not senses that launched metaphysical inquiry. (Remember that reason is derivative of the senses, i.e., of perception.) This is a difference that does not bother most people. However it is important nonetheless and marks the difference between the beliefs of Idealists and Mystical Naturalists.

The phenomenologist and Mystical Naturalist realize that the supernatural world believed in by religious types could not possibly come to be as an idea without man *first* encountering the natural world. It is nature's mysterious presence we wish to understand. In order to do so, and solve the puzzle, we take human propensities and project those into a metaphysical space. Our gods, angels, devils, heavens, hells, and the rest of the religious man's favorite hallucinations, have no reality in the way nature has reality. They remain *conceptions* not perceptions. The Mystical Naturalist is not overly concerned with the existence of a supernatural god because he's not overly interested in explaining nature's origin and ways. His focus is on how nature makes him *feel* now in the moment. He awes nature's vivid tangible presence and mystery, and finds nature worthy of respect, veneration and care. And he does not deign to craftily overstep or denigrate nature in order to mollify his puzzlement and discomfiture. His care for nature and desire to learn from nature's ordinances extends to his own body, which is made from the same stuff as the natural world. He cares for *himself* as he does for nature,

realizing that his own body and corporeality is nature's bestowal. The Mystical Naturalist is the implacable enemy of the religious man whose care for the body and world is either toxic or non-existent.

> *The universe is clearly very powerful. It creates and it destroys on a vast scale. So far as we know, the universe created all that exists; which is to say that, the universe as it is now was created by the universe as it was a moment ago, and that universe by the universe that existed a moment before that, and so on. If we view universe in this way, we can keep the idea of creator and creation and yet have no need to imagine a being apart from the universe who created it. The divine being is indeed a creator, in the pantheist view. Indeed, the creativity of the natural universe is probably the best evidence for its divinity* – Jan Garrett (*Introduction to Pantheism*)

For Schelling the universe is a being unto itself, alive and self-sustaining. Nature's negentropic capacity and power reveals that nature is to be understood as a conscious organism without beginning or end. Although nature's origins are mysterious, we have no way of becoming the beings we are without the mirror and guide of nature. Understanding this leads us to new conceptions about body, corporeality and divinity. We can no longer think of God and nature as separate, because they *do* or *act* similarly. By understanding more about nature – not merely by detached intellect alone – we learn the ways of Spirit. And if we wish to think of nature as Spirit, we are correct to do so. Spirit and nature are entertwined. They are the *same* being seen from two perspectives.

> *Lack of knowledge about the evolution of the organic from the "inorganic," coupled with misleading myths about life coming "into" this world from somewhere "outside," has made it difficult for us to see that the biosphere arises, or goes with, a certain degree of geological and astronomical evolution, as Douglas E. Harding has pointed out, we tend to think of this planet as a life-infested rock, which is as absurd as thinking the body as a cell-infested skeleton* – Alan Watts (*The Book: On the Taboo of Knowing Who You Are*)

> *...Surely, all forms of life, including man, must be understood as "symptoms" of the earth, the solar system, and the galaxy – in which case we cannot escape the conclusion that the galaxy is intelligent* – ibid

> *The first result of this illusion is that our attitude to the world "outside" us is largely hostile. We are forever "conquering" nature, space, mountains, deserts, bacteria, and insects instead of learning*

to cooperate with them in a harmonious order. In America the great symbols of this conquest are the bulldozer and the rocket – the instrument that batters the hills into flat tracts for little boxes made of ticky-tacky and the great phallic projectile that blasts the sky –
ibid

Regrettably, despite its ability to manufacture removed, superior gods, each mind thinks of itself as the sole possessor and generator of thought. What it finds impossible to accept is that consciousness, like the body, is a bestowal of nature and is non-local. Thought does not originate with the brain or mind. Mind is but one avenue via which consciousness transmits and makes itself known. The mind is but a single field or enclosure in which consciousness expresses itself. It is not the field that generates consciousness. We don't own consciousness, we experience it. And the interplay is never-ending and omnidirectional. Along the way we presumptuously attempt to net consciousness and pin it to a board. Its connection with us is so intimate that we childishly presume ourselves to be its origin. This is a major travesty that has caused all sorts of disruption in the world. This profoundly acquisitive attitude was described by William Blake as "Single Vision," and also as "Newton's Sleep." He was thinking of the philosophers and scientists of his age, and their myopic desire to make the world in their image, to imagine that everything in creation is made in the image of human thought. Actually, as Blake knew, man's existence is the consequence of the unfolding of Spirit which takes two forms – the natural *and* the human.

In light of this, it might be a good exercise for a mind to consider not only its own limitations – the illusions in which it is caught – but also that nature might not operate with any mode of consciousness comprehensible to us intellectually. That means we must humbly accept the limits of consciousness without projecting them elsewhere. It's hard to do – and few within modern science will be inclined to do it – but if we ever want to be free of the cage of thought, and have other doors thrown open, it's a must. (How this is accomplished is detailed in my book *Disciples of the Mysterium.)*

In this way we stay open and receptive to what *might* be. We respect total otherness just for the sake of it, without presumption and expectation. In this way we find ourselves unencumbered, light and deeply receptive. We are hungry for answers, yes, but not in the same voracious manner as when we clawed for scientific or metaphysical clarity and egoic aggrandizement. We made a God only to find him niggardly with the facts for dispelling mystery. If we enthrone nature and set no bounds upon what she can reveal, we might be met with

answers that truly fulfill our insatiable desire. And if we keep our ears to the ground and egos in check, we might even be imparted the key to the cage into which we have trapped our hearts and minds for so many ages. It's not impossible. If there is a starting point, it's merely to remember that it's not the hymn to nature that matters as much as the way it's sung.

CHAPTER TWO
Back to the Mirror

> *According to the new physics, observer and observed are somehow connected, and the inner domain of subjective thought turns out to be intimately conjoined to the external sphere of objective facts* – Leonard Shlain (*Art and Physics*)

Most Idealists will be ecstatic to hear that the latest cutting-edge scientific research categorically shows that nature is not only living but conscious. On a subatomic level things happen that can't possibly occur if matter is – as Bacon, Kepler, Newton, Descartes, Locke, Hobbes, and so many other materialists held – a dead thing jarred by determined mechanical forces.

But problematically, the kind of consciousness nature possesses is apparently quite different to that known to the humans attempting to probe it. We have had some success penetrating into the microscopic world with our kind of consciousness, but have been shocked to find matter looking more like mind every time we analyze the results of various experiments. Moreover, we are also disturbed to find the rules of the game changing drastically. Apparently nature does not want to join in the fun and play the game of hide-and-seek by our rules. And egos are getting bruised because of it.

In this world of appearances, of cause and effect, when we train our minds on a mystery, we usually make headway and understand something more about the object of our curiosity and study. In other words, mysteries yield to our penetrating intellects. Perversely, the situation appears uncannily different on the subatomic level. The more our intellects penetrate into the quantum universe, the less sure we are about what really happens there and why. As of this year, 2016, scientists are up against an adamantine wall apparently impervious to their questions and theories. Being able to "see" quanta trillions of times smaller than an atom, reveals the limits of the intellect's understanding. Nature is surely conscious. This can no longer be doubted by logical people able to grasp the facts gleaned from recent experimentation. But in discovering this fact we have, as said, found that nature doesn't play by our rules. In short, nature refuses to offer up her secrets. In this respect she's adopting a similar attitude to God.

Of course there was a thinker who warned us about this problem. He

was the German phenomenologist Martin Heidegger. Concealment of Being was a central tenet of his philosophy, which he referred to as Fundamental Ontology. As far as he was concerned, Being's being is revealed only to a point. And in his own strange evocative language he often emphasized that Being's being is intrinsically and irrevocably dark and hidden. Even our language only goes so far with sensible descriptions.

Since nothing we do changes this fact, Heidegger's became concerned with the question of how man's attitude toward Being changes when he realizes his intellectual impotency in the face of Being. He became concerned about the *relationship* between Being and the man who embodied a grand humility. In other words, for Heidegger the question of existence became the question concerning the *quality* of human life.

Even more central to Heidegger's ontology was the phenomenon of time. His seminal work is entitled *Being and Time,* published in 1927. According to Heidegger time might as well be another word for human, because man is ontologically or fundamentally a temporal being. The past is when we form our vision of who we want to become, and the future is when hopefully we become it. The possibilities by which we become who we wish to be are seized in the present – in the now. Moreover, for Heidegger the most important tense is the future. The main reason for this concerns one's death. Death is an event that lies for each person in the future. Unlike every other entity and being (inanimates and animals), man is philosophically *transcendent.* That is, he alone contemplates his past and future. Animals don't think of the future and don't mull over their last days on earth. They don't question the *meaning* of their lives. By contemplating our future we are forced to face the possibility of our death, which, as Heidegger points out, is a singularly personal event. Indeed it is the most personal event that can occur to us. My death happens to me alone. And therefore, although I experience deaths happening to this and that person, my relationship with death only matters when I am conscious of it as the possibility in my life that ends all possibilities. Heidegger believed that the lives we lead have meaning only when we are *beings-unto-death,* that is when we are profoundly and non-neurotically conscious of our finitude. Whether a man lives for 10 years, 60 years or 100 years, he's faced with his finitude and inability to postpone death. Heidegger hoped that we would grasp our possibilities with ardor, aware of how precious each moment of our lives is. He believed that by being-unto-death we live lives that are more authentic and vivid. Clearly the question concerning the *quality* of one's life is central to his thought.

And this point should be stressed. Quality *is* very important, and it does not matter what the span of our lives happens to be. Even if we lived for 100,000 years, or even if we were immortal, we'd still be faced with the question concerning the depth and meaning of our existence. If we lived the length of days of an elephant or a butterfly, we'd still be in a position to enhance or not enhance the quality of our lives. What is more, no other person can effect the change. They may suggest it, but they can't do it. It's a very personal decision and adventure, and we are the primary beneficiary of the life enhanced.

Now in the end we realize that there can be but two types of being or entity – conscious or non-conscious. That's all we can expect to know either in this world of appearances or in the quantum universe. So it might not be so fantastic to discover that nature is acting in a way that can be described as conscious, if that kind of consciousness considers us to be intruders or non-existent. And this is how today's physicists find themselves treated by nature or Being. They've found nature to be conscious, *but not of us.*

Where does this lead us? Back to Heidegger, who not only predicted this state of affairs, but told those who would listen, in the most profound language imaginable, what to do about it. This state of affairs endorses his call for a *grand humility* lost by man in the modern age. It calls for a receptivity, or as Heidegger said, a kind of "dwelling" with life. It calls for a kind of *being here* that situates man in his world and brings him home to the place or places where he feels fully human. Foundations were very important to Heidegger, because it is from our place of standing that we view the cosmos. It is also from that place that we turn attention inward. And the revelations that occur to us from one particular location differ from those experienced in another. We are a multiplicity of beings because we've occupied many different places, as well as times. We've a million different perspectives on what we are, and that's perfectly okay for Heidegger. It's the fixed unchanging vision of oneself that worries him.

The quantum scientist says that he can't get hold of the fundamental particles of reality. His very act of looking for and at them alters their behavior, and he is at a complete loss to explain why. His every waking moment is spent attempting to solve the conundrum. All the while he is unaware that the very person he takes himself to be is changing minute by minute and day by day. He can't get a hold of himself, let alone of reality.

As Heidegger's ancient mentor Heraclitus said, one can't step on the same piece of water twice. And it's quite true, even if the water is

fairly stagnant. Our foot's own activity disturbs and changes the water. We effect nature and nature effects us. But we acknowledge nature's existence, and now, after centuries of arrogance and denigration, we accept it as a volitional presence. But we can't explain why nature acts as if we don't exist. This problem is all the more strange, since we as beings are here because of nature. We are emanations of nature. So why the indifference?

Well Schelling and Bohme can answer this puzzle, but so can Heidegger. For him it was a matter of the quality of a man's life. We've already seen his exaltation of the future and of being-unto-death. We've seen that he believed in quality enhancement by accepting finitude. What we need to always remember from now on, is that the indifference of nature toward us is a consequence of the depth or shallowness of our being. And that is, as Heidegger knew all too well, nothing to do with science and its questions and problems. This is the pivot-point that turns humans into *beings,* that is into those for whom the *Question of Being* is an issue. And there's not a lot of people out there, says Heidegger, who behave as this kind of being or *dasein.* They are certainly not to be found in science or philosophy. Scientists and philosophers have, in his view, made everything else into an issue, and are mightily entangled in their projects. While submerged in the world we've made for ourselves, we operate in a state of profound existential blindness to things around us. In other words, our access to the things of the world is little more than utilitarian and functional. We don't really see the world at all. And because of this myopia we have conjured absurd notions about how we and the world interact. We've created a world of subjects and objects and of vulgar time - uniformly rotating clocks and watches marking the moments of our blinkered steps.

At the end of his academic career, Heidegger packed up and signed off. He didn't want to be a philosopher any longer. Echoing Schelling's comments on the limits of philosophy, Heidegger said philosophy was basically over. It had done its job and got us to where we are now. The next step for a person was to head in the direction of the musicians, painters, poets and artisans. He said this because he knew that if we are to enhance the quality of existence, it's as artists and artisans that we'll achieve it. And that entails the awakening of a profound and lasting aesthetic sensibility. It also marks a return to the senses, away from intellect and reason. It marks a return to the world as it really is, rather than how we configure and customize it to suit our *inauthentic* lives. It means a *home-coming* and a simplification. It means that to know a great deal we must know very little. We must empty out and step out. We must make visible to ourselves the

manner in which we actually operate in the world. In so doing, we make ourselves into a space or, as Heidegger has it, an *opening* in which we become visible, as it were, to Being. Without doing so there can be no deepening of the quality of life. We simply remain important to ourselves but strangers to nature.

We'll be treated with indifference because we remain indifferent to our own being. We have nothing but dismissal from nature because we are existentially invisible. We live but have no real existence. We are humans but not *beings*. We've manufactured, swallowed and digested so many aberrant ideas about what it means to be human, and what it means to be on this planet, that we have long ceased to be what we truly are. Consequently our image is no longer showing up on the mirror of nature. If it does flicker, now and then, it's as a unwholesome wraith – a toxic perplexed indistinct specter which succeeds only in banjaxing the experiment. Sadly, as Heidegger knew, this is not how things will remain. The situation for inauthentic man steadily and rapidly worsens. As said, intellect has picked a lot of locks and broken down a lot of doors to get as far into nature's hallowed halls as is now the case. But for all that effort and expenditure, for all the hubris and expectation, we find ourselves returning empty-handed to the outer lobby of the great mansion. We find that we've been craftily directed to the waiting room from which there is no escape, at least until nature herself unlocks the door.

And the irony is that we are emanations of the very force we are now compelled to marvel at, but once haughtily derided in favor of metaphysical conceptions. In any case we presently find ourselves trapped by the very force responsible for our existence and capacity to reason. We have been given the tools for the job of enhancing understanding, but have misused them in ways Heidegger so perceptively described. We have forgotten that its not the sword that has the power, but the hand that wields it. We have forgotten about motives and intentions. If these are not pure in kind, not rooted in a deep reverence for nature, they won't lead to revelation. Why? Simply because *we are nature!* Our attitudes and bearing toward her, mirrors that toward ourselves. And so we find ourselves in a feedback loop. We find that we can't see the beauty of the garden because we've been wiping the window – the means of seeing – with a dirty oil-soaked rag. We intend seeing what we want to see rather than what actually exists. And after centuries of malignancy – of murdering to dissect – we find ourselves to all intents and purposes debarred by nature from knowing what underlies her reality.

Only when man's relationship with *himself* changes for the better will

advancement come about and true answers be forthcoming. To learn the secrets of nature one must first be profoundly aware of the miracle of existence. And this process begins by Self-reflection. It starts when we notice the kind of cruelty that exists in our relationship with ourselves. It starts when we are at home with ourselves and cease imagining that we can install lasting goodness or peace into the lives of others who refuse to do it for themselves. It begins when we cease running away from ourselves and enter instead into a new meaningful relationship with our so-called darker emotions that society commands us to suppress and silence. It begins when we cease being emotional prostitutes, chronically dependent on the approval of other similarly emotionally-vagrant, self-sadistic people. It begins when we become, as Heidegger put it – "Shepherds of Being." He meant that we are caretakers of the world and its forms, not as Bacon, Descartes and Newton had it authorities *over* them. On the contrary, as Heraclitus, Zeno, Ficino, Schelling, Steiner, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Whitehead, and a few other aware men knew, we stand on top of vast ocean of Being, of which we are largely unaware. It's an ocean of wisdom impossible to intellectually know and fathom, even though we are its crowning glory, embodying on a preconscious level everything it is. We are unable to span its depth simply because we are, as Schelling explained, conscious beings before we are Self-conscious beings, and unconscious before we are conscious. We simply cannot fully tap into antecedent stages of being. We can but change the nature of our relationship with that portion of ourselves we are conscious of. That in itself brings forth from within a different light and tone. Cloaked in this more numinous spectrum we find ourselves finally able to walk through halls barred to us in the before-time.

That's right! Lives are finite. Heidegger was sure to point this out and tell us what to do about it. But his work is not to be taken as a manifesto of atheism or materialism. Questions of God and metaphysics were rarely addressed by him, that is true enough. He had thrown it all out, and good for him. But that does not mean his work is to be necessarily interpreted as reductionist and nominalist. After all, he did not delineate what kind of existence may be experienced by any given being *during* his finite life. That remained open as a subject. As a Personalist, Heidegger knew where to get off and leave us to our own conscience. The act of self-deception that leads to our inauthenticity, to the creation of the superego – a socially approved and endorsed but inauthentic mask and lifestyle – occurred due to a personal decision. It can, therefore, be reversed by a personal decision of a more thoughtful and Self-caring kind.

But it's okay, says Heidegger, if you don't want to go there. Your life

will then be what it is, and you'll be the beneficiary. It's not for anyone else to cajole or recriminate. They'd best get on with reversing their decision and enhancing their own quality of life, right? They'd better get on with opening up the doors of perception and imagination, in order to start feeling the heaving tides of that immense and beauteous ocean of Being upon which they float. As they do so, they'll learn what kind of unpretty things are dredged up from that wellspring by dirty little hands that have no place prying there. They'll learn that it is a feeling thing they sense below, beside and all around them. And as such, a different kind of receptivity and rapport must come into being; one in which intellect and collectivism play a negligible part. Science is not wanted either. Its prying hands are dirty too. And the mercurial, specular "quantum" realm has nothing to put into hands of that sort, nothing but failures, doubts and confusion.

But carry on mister and miss scientist. No one is getting in your way. As Blake said: "The fool who persists in his folly becomes wise." So dust off the white coat and carry on, because the labyrinth ahead is as long as needs be. It changes its dimensions as you enter in and with every step you take. It senses your underthought and mood long before you do. It becomes whatever you wish it to be. It snakes on, leading you on endlessly if necessary. After all, you came not in seriousness, but to play. And your intention presents no major problem. Gate-crashers are easily handled. Go ahead and explore all you want. Whatever you wish to see or be is granted. Let one problem drive you forth to new solutions. Let solutions open up new puzzles. Let the dance continue until the music stops. You'll be exactly where you are supposed to be.

The man of science will be endlessly duped and unfulfilled. His task on this planet, his actual project, was Self-realization. As it says on the ancient oracle of Delphi: "Know Thyself." But we have chosen to do otherwise. We've chosen to know everything about everything other than Self. And we are paying a heavy price for this act of self-deception. We have slowly been incarcerating ourselves in our inauthentic lives, and working all the while to decorate the walls of our prison. In the end we'll find that the journey toward pseudo-truth led only to complete confusion and existential meltdown. It's an inevitable consequence of cutting the branch you're sitting on, of strangling the roots which nourish your being.

No! said Schelling. You can't know the nature of the realm from which you emerged. But you can enter into a new and deeper relationship with the part of you that is conscious. The kick-off is a state of grand rather than neurotic humility. And that awe of Being must be a

constant companion. We're not speaking of arrogant or idle curiosity, or ambitious zeal. We aren't speaking of laurel leaf coronets and Nobel prizes. We aren't speaking about cracking codes or finding the back door to God. We aren't speaking about a science that seeks to stop aging, thereby prolonging the *inauthenticity* that already has us living in a spiritually comatose state. We aren't anticipating the posthuman world where cyborgs and androids function like geishas, making our inauthentic world faster, brighter, cleaner and safer. We aren't impressed by philosophical gymnastics and theories concerning immortality, the unreality of time or multiverses without end.

We aren't speaking of cunning changes to the fundamental precepts of science because the old ones proved to be bankrupt. We are not interested in conceptions of parallel universes which may or may not be identical to our own. We know that nothing fundamentally changes for us one way or another. As said, there can only be two kinds of entity and being – conscious or non-conscious. Which leads us back to the question, not of finitude but of quality. If thinking beings exist in other dimensions, what good is contacting them only to find out that they are just as existentially shallow as we are? What good is it to contact beings deeper and more profound than ourselves? Do you think they'd open their doors to us? Scientists are beginning to slowly see that this might indeed be the case. And they don't like it, because there's nothing they can do about it, if this scenario comes to pass. They are starting to see that we as inauthentic beings will only be able to communicate with beings lower or as lowly as ourselves (which is rather pointless), or find it impossible to open communications with anything or anyone higher. It's a case of having your best suit on with nowhere to go. Nowhere, that is but back to the dressing mirror to see oneself as one actually is; a brand new experience for the majority of the human race.

CHAPTER THREE
The Freedom of Man

> *...the history of the world is nothing but the development of the idea of freedom* – Georg Hegel

If one does not want to worship God, one is free to worship freedom. And why not? Freedom is the essence of essences and deserves veneration. Freedom lies behind our choice of gods and commitment to worship the one we like best. Freedom lies behind our worldly devotions. The people we love are loved because love is itself an expression and emanation of freedom. Without freedom neither God nor man can save us.

Schelling was the first thinker to make freedom the basis of his philosophy. His other interests, about nature, cosmos, time, moral law, culture, death, evil, etc, were secondary to his interest in human freedom. In a letter to his one-time friend Hegel he said, *The alpha and omega of all philosophy is freedom.* In fact, as far as Schelling was concerned, freedom was the central premise behind German Idealism. Too bad that he and his great work on freedom has been dismissed by most later philosophers and schools of philosophy. Schelling has been dismissed and so have his many intellectual predecessors. In fact, the entire German Romantic movement has, since the end of the Second World War, been either summarily ignored or misinterpreted. Indeed, Hegel stands as the number one most misinterpreted philosopher who ever lived. In the place of Romanticism and Idealism we have been force-fed Utilitarianism, Transcendentalism, Existentialism, Positivism, Pragmatism, Deconstructionism, and all the rest of it. We have also been inundated with every conceivable variety of body- and world-denying Eastern mysticism.

Even more scandalously, in almost every encyclopedia entry on free will, determinism, and the controversies raging between advocates of the opposing schools on these fundamental matters, Schelling's work is rarely if ever referenced. This is a strange omission, given that he was the philosopher who basically put problems of this kind to bed. Of course he does much more than resolve the question as to whether man's actions are free or determined. His monumentally important ideas on freedom also outdo Kant's brilliant reconciliation of Empiricism and Rationalism. Nevertheless, when atheists and proponents of "intelligent design" vociferously debate their issues, Schelling's name is never raised. This makes their made-for-TV argy-

bargy suspect and relatively pointless.

One philosopher who took a deep interest in Schelling's writings on freedom was Martin Heidegger. In his 1936 lectures on Schelling, published under the title *Schelling's Treatise: On the Essence of Human Freedom,* Heidegger takes us through Schelling's text on freedom step by step. These eloquent and profound lectures provide us with a cogent explanation of Schelling's central ideas on freedom.

For Schelling freedom is the absolute ground or basis of human nature. He was more conscious of this fact than most philosophers, and was astonished that the question of freedom had been given so little attention. He, Fichte and Hegel had been driven to philosophy in their youth partly by the need to refute Kant's agnostic philosophy which, figuratively speaking, leaves us at the door of the unobservable, unknowable "noumenal," and the sign which said *no further.* As far as the three thinkers were concerned, this was not good enough. It was not acceptable to them that God's existence could not be proven. Each man went about addressing the Kantian dilemma in different ways. As far as I am concerned Schelling's project is the most interesting, legitimate and crucial for today's world.

Like philosophers before his time Schelling understood that although man comes out of nature, he differs in crucial ways from the natural order of which he is certainly a part. But instead of addressing these differences in the manner of Plato, Kant, Descartes and Hegel, etc., Schelling framed the division between nature and man in terms of *necessity versus freedom.* The former was the condition of nature, the latter of man. Schelling could, like other philosophers, have phrased the dichotomy as subjects versus objects, mind versus matter, or noumenal versus phenomenal, etc. But no, for him it was a case of necessity versus freedom. As a quasi-Pantheist he was not inclined to use the term "mechanism" when referring to nature. Schelling did not regard nature as an essentially lifeless phenomenon, made up of randomly colliding material components. He did, however, realize that freedom was not an attribute of nature, at least not explicitly. If freedom and nature coincide, it is because of the *human* presence in nature. Humans are the bearers of freedom.

This perspective was Schelling's answer to his Idealistic predecessor Johann Fichte. According to the great Idealist, the Self or "I" is the supreme monad giving rise to any apparently external reality we perceive and conceive. The Self, in order to know itself, has the inherent ability to step outside itself, as it were. Selfhood implies the objectification of the Self *by* the Self. Schelling accepted this aspect of

Fichte's philosophy, but realized that during and after objectification occurs, the world of nature comes to be. It is the all-important *background* which gives the object its substantiality. However, the Self not only comes to itself by way of the passive background of nature, but constitutes what is known about nature. As we will see in Chapter Six, the supernal Will is the origin of the objectification process that leads simultaneously to awareness of Self *and* of nature. It is also the means by which we understand nature's nature, implying that in our knowledge of nature there is inevitably a measure of Self-knowledge, which was Fichte's focus. There is no pure objectivity about nature, which loomed into being because of the mysterious process by which Self knows Self, and can never be isolated from this epistemological process. As Otto Rank, the great twentieth century psychologist, might have put it, on the originary level human will and natural will meet as one. It is only later that we mistakenly consider nature to operate according to antithetical rules to human consciousness, or as Descartes and the materialists think, that mind and world are separate entities. In fact, given that nature is, as Schelling argued, the co-origin of consciousness and Selfhood – that Selfhood is an emanation of nature – nature therefore views and comprehends *itself* through human consciousness. As Schelling himself wrote, "Nature is visible Spirit, Spirit is invisible Nature."

> *To the Transcendental Philosophy, Nature is nothing but the organ of self-consciousness, and everything in Nature is only necessary because only through such a Nature can self-consciousness be achieved* – Schelling

In this way Schelling expanded the rather solipsistic ideas of Fichte and refuted those espoused by Descartes and Kant. After all, whether God exists or not, nature certainly exists and serves not only as an instructor of physical possibility but as moral guide. What we know and do in the world is born from lessons learned *from the world and in the world.* Each aspect of what we are – personally and socially, physically and intellectually – is the consequence of nature's presence and subtle, largely unrecognized instruction. In other words human will is profoundly shaped and rarified by nature because the latter is an emanation and embodiment of Spirit. In fact, as said above, without nature providing the background there can be no question of Selfhood at all. Crucially this implies that the connection between man and nature is as ontologically essential as that between man and God. Man does not come to Selfhood by way of God's Will alone, but also by way of nature. In fact we come to knowledge of God not directly but by way of nature. Without nature we are unable either to come to Selfhood or to knowledge of Spirit. This radical perspective

was of great importance to Schelling.

Understanding this takes us to the heart of the philosophy of Idealism. A primordial act of unconscious Will causes the psychic split by which consciousness becomes aware of itself. The process of objectification – the division of subject from object – is initiated by the Self which turns, as it were, to face and view *itself*. We can say, as Schelling did, that a "space" is formed between the Self and its *idea* of itself. Because of this bifurcation and Self-reflexivity, we as humans are not able to remain static beings. Instead we are compelled to evolve to higher levels of Self-consciousness and world-awareness. In that space between Self and Idea nature becomes a reality for us. It is the essential background on which the temporal process of Self-awareness occurs. So the Idealist is quite correct when he states that the apparently external world is *not* material but Ideal or mental. Nature's apparent materiality is derivative of the Idea not the originary Self, because the former is itself the object or derivative of the latter.

> *...the physical world is "a world" only in relation to the individual subject, in virtue of the cleaving of consciousness into object and subject, a cleaving that results precisely from the "egoic" polarization of the soul* – Titus Burckhardt (*Mirror of the Intellect*)

The objectified derivative Idea-self is bound to nature as it is to culture which in its own right, like nature, provides a background on which Self-realization occurs. By way of our domestic and social encounters, collaborations and conflicts, the Self's apprehension of itself intensifies, progresses and matures. As Schelling and Hegel would have put it, Spirit in both subjective and objective form – in itself and for itself – attains the goal of Absolute Idea.

> *The Hegelian God as starting-point is at first being per se and unconscious, only God as result is being " for-self " and conscious, is Spirit. That the attaining to being-for-self, the becoming an object to self is really a coming to consciousness, is clearly expressed by Hegel...The theory of the Unconscious is the necessary...presupposition of every objective or absolute Idealism, which is not unambiguously Theism* – Eduard von Hartmann (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*)

We see then that Descartes certainly got it wrong. It is not a question of minds interacting with matter, but of Spirit interacting with *itself* in objectified form. In this way Schelling was able to reject Kant's "noumenal" dimension and the conundrums it gives rise to. The so-called noumenal realm is unknown only because it is the ground from

which Self-consciousness arises. Although it is unknowable to us, we know it exists. There is no need for religious beliefs and faith. The noumenal is the dark ground of being and will, and Selfhood is its sole proof.

Whatever is perceived and conceived is constituted by *naturalized* Spirit, while the perceiving, conceiving mind exists by way of the same Spirit *humanized.* Spirit progresses and becomes more whole by way of this interactivity which, although it involves a bifurcation or splitting into subject and object, is not to be construed in hard dualistic terms. To think of the two poles of Spirit as essentially different leads to endless puzzles and problems from which there is no rational sustainable escape. It is their coherence and similarity that interested Schelling and other Idealists such as Hegel.

Descartes confirmed existence by way of thinking: *I think therefore I am.* True enough. But for Schelling it would have been clearer to say I think about *myself* and that confirms my existence. *I am in order to think,* and objectively thinking of myself as thinker is what matters, leading to the rest of reality having existence and meaning.

On the deepest level, for Schelling, nature's ordinances are as free as human consciousness. After all our own bodies which house consciousness are *natural* and of the world. Bodies are made of the same stuff as the world, and since a physical body is conscious and willful, there is no difficulty or inconsistency when we regard nature

as a whole as conscious and willful. To deny nature such an identity is to simultaneously deny the body as an integral part of Self, which is certainly irrational and contradictory. Denigration of the body and world of nature is of course a central tenet of most Eastern traditions, and many Western ones also. However, by way of Schelling's Idealism we see how bankrupt such ideas are.

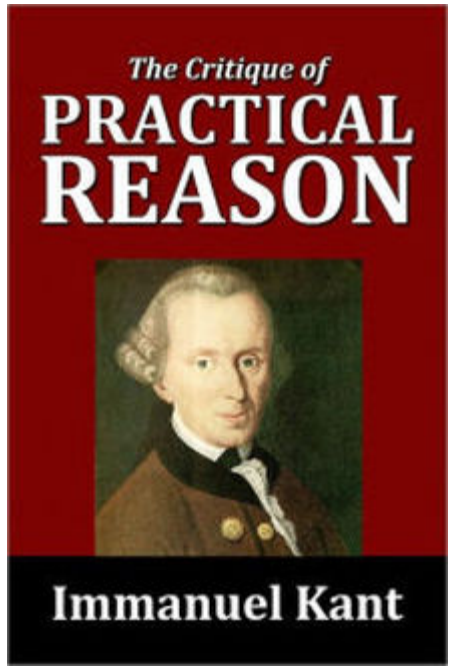
That nature is falsely regarded as an indifferent will-less mechanism only means that man's *thinking* about nature has become insensitive, mechanistic, alienated and deranged. After all, if freedom is not inherent within nature, from where did freedom arise? How does man come to have freedom as the foundation of his being? Why does it undergird everything about man and his world? Why is man free to reject being free and turn away from Self-consciousness? Why is he free to deny freedom to others? Why is he free to discern how he differs from other people and the natural world? Why is he free to ignore questions about his fundamental nature and origin? Why is he free to accept unsustainable answers to such questions? Why is free to do evil and destroy?

Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) was the first of the great German Idealists whose work attempted to counter and rectify Immanuel Kant's skeptical philosophy. He was probably the first thinker to place the Self at the center of reality. He, not Hegel, originated the Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis idea. He agreed with Kant and also equated God with freedom, virtue and moral action. His

ideas were ruthlessly ridiculed by men such as Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, who had nothing substantial or coherent to put in place of his philosophy.

According to Schelling, whether nature is implicitly free or not, man certainly is. This is because God made him so. That's right. As far as Schelling was concerned, Kant knew the implications of morality, but was less emphatic on the matter than he should have been. Schelling emphasized how morality opened the way to the noumenal realm. Or, more correctly, the moral person alone experiences the noumenal in their phenomenal life. Kant correctly stated that living strictly according to the moral law suffices to bring us close to the noumenal, to God. But Schelling said that freedom takes us closer still. After all, in order to be moral, one must first be free to choose morality. One must be free to reject any part of it, or all of it. Since this is a capacity not bestowed by nature or the Self, it must be by way of God that man is essentially virtuous and free. As Kant, Fichte and Schelling knew, the non-virtuous man is indeed Godless. His actions are not based on a correct understanding of freedom's origin and purpose. As a result, although he may *believe* in God, the virtueless man does not act in accordance with the spirit of God, as the virtuous man does. At the end of his days he finds himself ashamed and guilty of his unethical narcissistic behavior. He ignored the voice of his conscience time and again, denying it in favor of hedonic ends. To assuage inner shame he prefers the company of people as immoral as himself, and as a result he brings corruption to the world.

Kant would no doubt have agreed wholeheartedly with Schelling, had he been alive to discuss the matter with him. Kant labored to show the limits of reason in his first masterpiece *The Critique of Pure Reason,* but went on to explain how morality connects us with God in his second work *The Critique of Practical Reason.* Evidently it is this text which inspired Schelling. Suggestively, this second treatise on the connections between God and human virtue is less read and discussed than Kant's earlier book. It should be the first and foremost text read by anyone interested in philosophy, psychology, theology and ethics.



A materialist will refute Kant's and Schelling's ideas on freedom and say that men are free by way of human convention. But this is clearly false. Freedom is ontological and not the creation of culture. One is free regardless of what tribe and tradition they come from. Whether one is a Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist, Jain, Jew, Muslim or Christian is beside the point. It has nothing to do with the fact of freedom. This was understood by Heidegger. Schelling and Heidegger addressed freedom for *man,* not as a "this" or "that," but as a *dasein* or human, pure and simple. What someone from a specific background does with their freedom is their business. They can awe it or abuse it as they see fit. After all, they are free to do so. Indeed, if a person chooses to equate God and freedom, they are free to do so. If that seems unpalatable, as it does to an atheist, that is fine also. The atheist who properly esteems freedom can forgo relating to it in metaphysical or mystical terms. He worships that which is most important, which is what counts. His antagonism with the theist fizzles on this matter. As long as freedom is venerated, as a god or a principle, all is well. This of course does not exonerate a person who, under a religious guise, abuses rather than esteems freedom. And there is no doubt that freedom and religion are not normally strongly associated. Religion is for the most part the antithesis of freedom. It is about impositions, fixity and blind obedience. But again, the slave is free to obey whatever master he sets above himself. He is also free to rebel against his master and topple him to the ground if the need arises. Each person in the world is free to limit himself in whatever manner seems

appropriate at the time, and free to back out of those same limits when the time is right.

> *Something is only known, or even felt, to be a restriction...if one is at the same time beyond it* – Georg Hegel (*The Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*)

Our lives are from moment to moment a delimiting and return to freedom. Every interest we have, every hobby, occupation and skill constitutes a period of delimitation and exclusion. If we focus on this flower, the landscape around us disappears. When we focus on this tree, the forest vanishes. From birth to death this is the process a human experiences and is rarely aware of. It's a process that also occurs psychologically. We are this person today and someone different tomorrow. How is this change achieved? Today we avoid that person, tomorrow he's a great mate. We say, I chose to make the change. I *felt* like it. But we never say or marvel at the fact that freedom made it possible. We never recognize that freedom is what truly links one man to another. And freedom, as said, exists regardless of what hat one wears. Regardless of what creed, caste or class one comes from or subscribes to, and regardless of one's level of intelligence, one is ontologically free, and can never be anything else.

So is our freedom a bestowal of God? Is it the principle by which we know the noumenal, which according to Kant's first Critique is unknowable? According to Schelling the answer is yes. Even our will is referred to as "free will." The means by which I become who I am, and by which I effect changes within myself and in the world, even if limited in some way (as Fichte supposed), still emphasize my basic freedom. Imposed limits are imposed by consciousness on itself but only so that freedom is directed positively. They are imposed by nature and society for the same reason. These limits exist because without them the Self cannot be circumscribed and identified. Nor can the world of nature or other people. It is all a blur, so to speak. As Fichte, Schelling and Hegel understood, a limit on the will makes one more conscious of the *way* they do things. And that opens the door to individuation. Everyone is capable of being aware of their actions, but few are aware of the manner in which they do what they do. The latter is the truly *moral* being, the true image of God in the world.

As said, the supremely important fact for Schelling was that freedom is the essential condition of humanity. It is not a bestowal of the materialist's blind nature or the result of culture. Culture is itself the result and expression of freedom. As William Blake showed, the society of a psychopath reflects his deviant relationship to freedom. If

he feels himself free to abuse and destroy, he will build his culture so that these vices are considered normal. But given that his culture contains other people like himself, they have chosen – freely chosen – to enjoy and perpetuate the status quo. So even the most perfidious culture exists by way of free choice.

We see then that freedom is the common denominator of all human activity. As a bestowal from God, it stands as a proof of God's existence, but not in a way most theists readily acknowledge. As we said, God and freedom may be *one,* but religion and freedom have never enjoyed each others company. Heidegger was aware that Schelling's God is a far cry from that claimed by religion. It is not a metaphysical God we are talking about. One confuses the matter by calling freedom "God." Of course, they are free to do so. They are free to anthropomorphize freedom if that is their preference. But freedom stands even if God does not. Hegel knew this was the right attitude, even though he was compelled by circumstance to pretend he was speaking of a theistic deity when he referred to Geist or Spirit. Schelling did believe in God, and we know why. His mystical predecessors – men such as Meister Eckhart, Jacob Bohme, Nicholas of Cusa, Franz von Baader, Friedrich Oetinger, Matthaus Hahn, and others – were likewise believers. They were men of faith, and by faith they overcome Kant's dilemma in the manner suggested by Kant himself. Schelling, however, wanted to go further. And he succeeded where everyone else failed. What he gave the world was man's true God.

> *Since freedom is unthinkable in opposition to omnipotence, is there any other escape from this argument than by placing man and his freedom in the divine being, by saying that man exists not outside God but in God, and that man's activity itself belongs to God's life? From this very point of view, mystics and religious temperaments in all ages have come to believe in the unity of man with God, a belief which seems to appeal to our inmost feelings as much as, or even more than, it does to reason and speculation* – Schelling

> *...philosophy teaches us that all the properties of Spirit exist only through Freedom. All are but means of attaining Freedom; all seek and produce this and this alone. It is an insight of speculative philosophy that Freedom is the sole truth of Spirit...Freedom is itself its own object of attainment and the sole purpose of Spirit. It is the ultimate purpose toward which all world history has continually aimed* – Georg Hegel (*Reason in History*)

If one wishes to cloak freedom in metaphysical or theological

trappings, it is their own affair. They have the freedom to do so. But we need not bother with all that, if we don't want to. As Heidegger understood, Schelling gives us something that is at once metaphysical but also indelibly and profoundly phenomenological. Indeed, most of what we get when we grasp the meaning of freedom is as practical and vivid as anything could be. This is because freedom is under the direct care of humans. It is to be grasped, protected, cared for and cherished by humans here in this world. It is the instrument by which man is man as a Being-in-the-World. Even if a man wishes to end his days moving in the world as a master or slave, subject or object, individual or collectivist, he expresses his free will by doing so. If he never gives his ontological freedom a second thought, he is also free to do so. Nothing changes except his own quality of life.

So freedom need not be metaphysicalized. Its essential nature changes not regardless of whether its origins are considered natural or supernatural. The striking fact is that as God, freedom has been in our hands all along. And should freedom actually be the bestowal of a theistic or transcendent God, it follows that he is the author of man and nature. The process of how nature came into being subject to the laws of necessity, and how humankind came into being subject to freedom, is explained in detail throughout Schelling's major works. His account is similar to that of Jacob Bohme and other earlier German mystics. In short, man arises as a conscious and then Self-conscious being due to nature's unconscious processes, themselves inaugurated and set in motion by God's Will. The creation of nature opens the way for the possibility of conscious life to arise. For Schelling, man is nature made conscious. Indeed, man is God made conscious. His is a being made by God by *way of nature.* We see that it is therefore quite wrong to think of nature as will-less. It is the creation of a willful being, i.e., God, and is the means (as well as the background) by which God in *human form* becomes Self-aware and Self-directing. This is why Schelling did not think of nature as dead or mechanical. He understood that nature's processes are akin to what we refer to as "thought" or "reason" because it is possible that nature not only preceded these attributes, but gave rise to them by way of a more primordial unconscious movement. Crucially, without nature's influence man is unable to attain Self-consciousness, the necessary state required for knowledge of Spirit to arise. We see then that for a relationship between man and God to commence, nature must be midwife.

> *The common postulation of an eternal spirit first, then a material world consciously created or produced by it, is by him reversed – matter being to him first and spirit supervening with growing*

subjectiveness, until pure and perfect ideality is reached, but such spirit, in this late sense, not being Creator of the world. In this way infinite nature came to objectivize itself in its own perfected works. The Absolute is, in all the real products of nature, identical with these, its products – identical with the material world. The real and the ideal are, in the Absolute, identical – James Lindsay (*The Philosophy of Schelling*)

This is in short the case for Pantheism. For the Pantheist it is unthinkable that nature, with its negentropic or self-organizing powers, is not the origin and ultimate ground of man, God and freedom. If nature serves as the medium through which our existence and free will come to be, it cannot not be the ultimate origin of all. However for Schelling it is also logical to suppose that the consciousness of God preceded nature. In this case nature – is an emanation of God's Will, and the means by which he becomes *Self-conscious.* What existed with God before nature is unanswerable. We know God, Nature and Self, but, being last in line, we are unable to know what existed previously to the first. What we know is that God created nature and man by acts of his free supernal Will, and it is this freedom that provides us with our direct inviolable connection to the divine mind. God imparts to man what he himself is. He imparts freedom because freedom is his foundation, as it becomes man's foundation, with the laws of nature serving to amplify the same. We know God as creator and know nature as the means by which he first objectified himself, moving thence to create free beings. But we cannot know how God himself became free. We can only speculate and presume God to be his own ground. What we can be sure of is that our freedom is not the bestowal of nature which is locked into fixed laws. Consequently we *must* be the emanation of a free willful being – of Spirit.

We are now able to comprehend how the laws of necessity, inherent in nature, coexist alongside freedom as embodied by humans. We resolve the age old mystery when we understand that Spirit is the origin of *both* nature and humanity. Again, if the ordinances of nature are fixed but God and man are free, it follows that nature was created by something essentially free not fixed. This is logical and not problematic. After all, do our own free conscious or unconscious acts not bring about unintended consequences and effects? Do our free and willful thoughts and actions not often lead to fixed unchangeable outcomes?

In freedom there shall be necessity…Through freedom itself, and in that I think to act freely, there shall unconsciously, i.e., without my

assistance, come to pass what I did not intend – Schelling (*The System of Transcendental Idealism*)

We see from this that Will is originary. It comes first and the obstacles and limits on the Will come second. They arise because of the Will but are nevertheless *derivative.* Take this scenario up to the ontological level and the order *remains.* Nature's fixed laws must also be derivative of the activity of Spirit.

Nature not only yields to and accommodates free acting beings, but reinforces those acts, serving to delineate the capacity and efficacy of free acts in this or that situation encountered in time and the natural world. We see then that nature is a consequence of God's free creative act, and serves as the living theater in which man acts and develops as a free being, thereby understanding himself not only as a free being, but finally as a *moral* being. To act as an unfree being is unthinkable because such an autistic being could not become a rational Self to subsequently conceive of something greater than itself, be it nature or God. As Hegel and Schelling knew, our rational thought or idea of God is itself the substantial proof of his existence. More correctly, the *thinking* itself is the divine – the Spirit or Logos – in action. Thinking does not require proof of God because it is the proof. The very act of objectification (a free act of the embodied Self) as a primary act of Spirit, is also evidence of God's existence. We simply replicate the original objectification of God's Self which is the cause and substance of our existence and identity. Whereas we each inhabit a physical body, God's "body" is total reality, including each being in it.

When we view ourselves objectively in a mirror or through interactions with other people, do we think of it as proof of God's existence? Schelling did.

Once this is understood we are still left with the need to explain God's origin, if that is possible. Schelling was influenced in this inquiry by his great German predecessors, Jacob Bohme, Nicholas of Cusa, Meister Eckhart, and others who spoke of God's inability to fathom the depths of his own "unconscious," and know the ultimate nature of the ground which preceded him. However, speculation aside, the crucial and obvious fact is that God imparts freedom to beings *in the world.* If we fail to see God's existence and nature's laws in context of human freedom – if we fail to see that necessity and freedom are two expressions of a single supernal Logos – it is because we have become fixed within narrow cognitive limits and lost sight of freedom's implications. Freedom is the gift we give back to nature as we construct healthy human cultures. Freedom gives rise to and infuses our art, poetry, music and architecture, and instructs each human mind and heart regardless of whether religions exist or not. As far as Heidegger was concerned, freedom is the sacred aspect of Being. But no shrines need be built to it, and no priesthoods need hammer it into a creed. No one need die in the name of freedom.

For Schelling, *belief* in God means nothing, and has no philosophical value whatsoever. Such beliefs serve only to soothe the anxieties of people who relate to the world primarily on an emotional level. They need God in the same way they need mothers and fathers, which is why priests are also required, as stand-ins for the God of belief. What

mattered to Schelling, and to Kant before him, is that one lives a virtuous life. This alone is Godly, because one's *morality* is the outward expression of freedom, which is in turn the means by we are directly connected to God, a connection that exists in this world, here and now. Belief therefore serves no useful purpose, except to artificially divide men who should require neither belief nor emotional placation. Since the moral law is an extension of human freedom, which is the divine made flesh, good men need nothing more to serve God. In fact, in their virtue they *are* God.

The reason so many balk at this apparently heretical idea should be obvious; virtue requires work, whereas belief requires none. Virtue requires *Self-knowledge,* and believers recoil from this exercise more than anything else, taking refuge in belief because it provides salvation from having to look within and take responsibility for every thought and deed. If a single person acts in this way the consequences are negligible. However, when a culture acts in this way evil soon becomes the order of the day. As William Blake and other sages warned, it is by way of a malignant culture that the deadliest evils come into being. The deviant culture breeds one deviant person after another. A look at our present world confirms this fact. The religions, sciences and political and psychiatric institutions work overtime to fill the minds of children and adults with "Mysteria" or pernicious fictions about being, Self, nature and existence. Each exist to "fix" the broken man who is actually their product. Each work to dehumanize, infantilize and enslave human beings. In the grip of these "Satanic Mills," and poisoned by their creeds, man loses touch with his conscience and will. He loses himself in his occupations and recreations, but knows little of *vocation.* He is not permitted to use his own judgment or question authority, or meant to discover why his life is mediocre and meaningless. Spiritually desolate and infatuated with domestic minutiae, he comes to rely on his imperious misleaders more and more. In fact he becomes addicted to their voices, depending on the stabilizers they provide to keep him from drowning in the psychic abyss within. To win their approval he unhesitatingly gives up what is left of his individuality and free will. In the end, such a docile specimen inwardly craves annihilation. He and his culture succeed only in producing the next generation of immoral or amoral deviants craving ever-increasingly demented and violent titillation.

The Scottish philosopher David Hume proved that causality does not exist in the phenomenal world. Causes and effects are hypothetical principles mentally imposed upon the world and its objects and happenings. Kant did not disagree with this, but showed that the law of causality does exist on the moral dimension, as all truly moral

people know. Indeed, the evil man will at some point in his hedonistic career be paid back for his immoral or amoral deeds. So whether causes and effects are perceived in the real world or not, they exist for people aware of what their *actions* as moral or immoral Beings-in-the-World yield.

Now as Heidegger pointed out, freedom may lie at the base of our being, but why? Freedom is always *active* both in thought and deed, and must be directed toward a purpose. Free beings are able to do good or evil acts. But since freedom can hardly be both of God and for the purpose of evil, it must be of God and for the purpose of doing only good. We are driven to then ask, what is the highest good? This is a question that has been asked and answered by Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and every other philosopher concerned with man's true purpose. Heidegger was not inclined to think of answers in a metaphysical sense. Man was for him a Being-in-the-World, in touch with other beings and entities here and now. If a man does evil, it is because his relationship with himself and the real, with virtue and freedom, is a deviant one. His evil manifests itself when he stands in the way not only of himself, but of other people, who as moral beings must strive against him and his ways. This striving against what one is not, against what contradicts or expunges what one is, gives special importance to being and its ontological attributes. It makes us all the more conscious of what we are, and of what it means to be and do good, personally and culturally. In this sense evil can be seen as the force which violates identity and nullifies consciousness of Self as Self. Since the Self is free, we see that evil is that which *opposes* rather than engenders freedom. But the source of evil does not lie outside man or God. Indeed, as Schelling emphasized, evil exists at the foundation of God and man, as freedom does. One cannot exist without the other. By evil's negation of identity, identity is strengthened. As Nietzsche said: *That which does not kill us, makes us stronger.* Schelling was aware of this edict long before Nietzsche's day.

This interpretation of evil's purpose is confirmed when we examine its workings on the social or cultural level. The abuser of freedom is the one who fails to see himself as the other, that is he fails to understand that his relationship with other people posits his own identity. His negation of the existence and rights of others (of the moral law) reflects his impoverished Self-image and being. His "evil" lies in this, that unlike God in relation to man – one knowing himself in the other – the evil man sees nothing of himself in the other, because there is nothing to see or know. The evil man has pathologically retreated within himself to the extent that the world of people and their moral law no longer substantially or meaningfully exist. But this retraction

from culture is not a move toward authentic Selfhood. On the contrary, it is a negation of Selfhood which requires the world of other people (the Mitwelt) to be and act creatively and holistically. Evil acts serve to separate one from the very source of Selfhood and being. Evil is therefore a pathological move *away* from personal and cultural unity. And the main cause of this retraction? As said above, it is a *deviant culture.*

Paradoxically, it is the evil man who, despite his inner struggle, can do the greatest good for his culture. By negating his evil will, and not acting on his urges and impulses, he can seek instead to discover evil's origin. After he realizes that the source of evil in his culture, he is motivated to proactively change the latter for the better. In this way he finds his vocation and thereby overcomes his depression, futility and hostility. As Hegel and others understood, it is men of this sort that must be put in charge of the culture. In time, a culture formed and guided by such men becomes a culture that makes this Self-healing possible. Eventually evil itself passes away.

The reality and presence of evil makes us vividly aware that each living creature arises from the same source to become the differentiated identity it usually does not wish to renounce. What allows me to know myself by knowing you? How do you know yourself through me? That a person can know and love themselves through another means that each person's Selfhood is rooted in a common primordial ground. Evil is also rooted in this same ground, but as Schelling said, the ground expresses itself both as a life-creating force, and as the desire to remain as it is. It is also the place which calls all things to return and lose their identity in the dark origin from which they sprang. Evil is, therefore, nothing more than this regressive urge and negation of being and Selfhood.

The evil man – as an abuser of the moral law – suffers as a result of his regressive tendency. As Kant pointed out, he who wins all the world, but gains what he has immorally, is not a happy person at the end of his life. He is certainly not *free.* On the contrary, he is inwardly ashamed at the *way* he attained his riches and success. And no God or man can make him whole again. The evil man can only hope to fill the world with immoral or amoral people such as himself, and in that way justify his malignant behavior. But even if he succeeds in this enterprise, he won't find happiness. As Kant and Schelling show, the moral law is always an extension of freedom. It serves as a limit, but one that emphasizes the opposite of limitation. Moral law is therefore rational and sane. One conforms to it not out of fear or oppressive duty, but from care for oneself and others. The limit imposed on my

will by the moral law, opens a space for others to express their will. As civilized people we give each other room, and do so freely. We do so because we venerate freedom for itself. That is the mark of a authentic dasein or human being. Establishing the moral law creates the space whereby we express our true Selves. In that space we are able to create, discover, interact and grow. By way of our freedom we are able to commune with beings like ourselves, and know ourselves in ways not available to us in the wild. By way of our experience of freedom, we learn to get out of other people's way and not hinder them as they journey toward Self-realization. In return for our virtue in this regard, other people learn to step out of our way, that we might more effectively attain the Self-knowledge that can only be actualized by free beings in the world they learn to relate with purely and justly. And should we fail now and again, we have, as Schelling emphasized, our own history, personally and collectively, to remind us in no uncertain terms what *not* to do.

> *History as a whole is a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the Absolute* – Schelling

CHAPTER FOUR
The Existential Trinity: Umwelt, Mitwelt, Eigenwelt

Any fool is capable of asking the important questions of philosophy, but only a philosopher is capable of finding their answers – Michael Tsarion

How are we able to know ourselves as Selves throughout our lives? We have myriad experiences in a world constantly throwing stimuli our way. Our senses are ablaze with the content of the world around us, so much so that occasionally we do feel overwhelmed by it all. When we feel stressed and flooded we attempt to shut out the world and decompress. When and if we suffer a bereavement it is as if the world we knew and took for granted no longer exists. We close the doors and retreat within ourselves, or so it seems. But it is only for a while because for most of us it isn't possible to completely disengage from the busy, hectic world and all its bright lights, colors and voices.

Of course a psychologist will disagree and say that some people are able to do just that. Schizophrenics and other pathological types have withdrawn from the world, human and natural, and have willingly retreated behind the walls of their own minds, to live relatively impoverished lives. Their neurotic or psychotic tendencies are the result of their acute psychophobia, distaste of other people and chagrin about human imperfection, hypocrisy and explicit need to control. The schizophrenic isn't regressing in the traditionally accepted sense. That is, he does not desire to return to a childlike state, as if that will provide him with a refuge from the world's impositions. No, because it was in his own infancy that his antipathy with the world began. On the contrary, life as an active *Self* simply ceases for the schizophrenic. He's present but not as a vital human being engaged with himself or the world. He is as much alienated from himself as he is from the therapist and other people around him. What is more, he has ceased to be a temporal being. He is static and petrified, and past, present and future are no longer important factors for him. The constituents of being are no longer fully functioning and expressing themselves. In the Reichean sense he has become so pathologically "armored" that his bioenergy has ceased flowing vitally and freely. Psychologically, he has given up his biographical Self. He stands outside of time and his image of himself, instead of being singular, consistent, articulated and vivid, is fragmented, indistinct and

contradictory.

So again we ask, how do we as "normal" types possess a consistent biographical "I" or Self? Given that the world throws so many varied experiences at us, all of which must be negotiated, understood and processed, we should be innumerable selves of a day. We should not know ourselves today as we knew ourselves yesterday or when we were youngsters. We should not possess that ability. And given that we should lack a consistent Self-image we should not know our friends and associates in a predictable and familiar way. They too should be radically changing by the hour and day so as to be relatively unrecognizable. With all the changes experienced in life, how to we remain Self-aware and Self-directing?

The great psychoanalyst Otto Rank spoke of the Self's attribute of centroversion, the ability to coherently preserve identity while experiencing the variegation of worldly life. This act of centroversion is a component or constituent of the Will which is the term Rank used for the underlying life-force. As a drive or compulsion the Will is often referred to as Eros, bioenergy, libido, Elan Vital, Spirit, Animus, Logos, Order or Will-to-Power, etc. These terms also imply a process of psychosomatic awareness and creative unfolding. Will is the compulsion behind the act of becoming, the impetus behind our engagement with the world and other people. It is also the resoluteness that prevents us being overwhelmed by the manifold stimuli of the world. In technical terms the world of nature and animals is known as the Umwelt (or Around-World), and the world of other people, the human world, is known as the Mitwelt (or With-World). The world of the Self or subject is the Eigenwelt (or I-World).

Otto Rank (1884-1939) was the obscure but brilliant thinker and prolific writer whose ideas bridge the subjects of existential psychology and philosophy. His ideas are akin to those of F. W. J. Schelling, Martin Heidegger and William Blake. When he spoke of the Will, it was in a different sense than that proposed by Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. His ideas on dreams and the origin of the ego, correspond closely to those later advocated by Julian Jaynes.

Each individual inhabits all three worlds, and can never not do so, even if they become schizophrenic. It can be said, therefore, that each individual is three persons in one. In philosophical terms, the three dimensions or worlds are ontological or fundamental. And psychologists such as Rank are interested not only in how an individual functions in each of these worlds, but how these worlds constitute individuality or Selfhood. If a man's relationship with one or all of these worlds is impaired in some way he becomes pathological. His condition in turn affects the world around him, particularly the Mitwelt. As Heidegger stressed, man does not operate in the world exclusively as a subject among objects in the hard Cartesian sense. The comportment is far more intimate than that. This point was conceded as a certainty by Rank and by Schelling before him. It was conceded by Existential psychologists such as Ludwig Binswanger, whose psychoanalytic system was largely based on the teachings of Martin Heidegger.

LEFT: Ludwig Binswanger. RIGHT: Martin Heidegger. Binswanger's psychological school and technique paid close attention to the condition of man as described by Otto Rank, and particularly as explained by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time.* It specifically addresses man as, so to speak, an Existential Trinity, that is as a being or dasein inhabiting natural, societal and personal worlds simultaneously. Binswanger believed that by analyzing an individual's competence as a being in these worlds, one comes upon the roots of the pathological trends that inhibit him. One is thereby able to offer proper and constructive guidance. For Binswanger it is self-evident that each world has negatives of its own, which in turn undermine the individual's sense of Selfhood and wellbeing. Although Heidegger had little to say about the subject of psychology, he corresponded with Binswanger and authenticated the Existential approach of the latter and his school. The French Heideggerean philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty gave lectures on the ideas of Otto Rank.

Again, the person who negotiates the Umwelt and Mitwelt is assaulted on all sides, so much that he can become neurotic and lose a holistic sense of himself as a temporal and articulated being. For some people, their center becomes the Mitwelt or world of other people. The inauthentic *das man,* as Heidegger termed him, goes along with the crowd unreflectively. He is part of his culture but isn't really contributing to it. If his culture is compromised or destroyed by foreign elements, or changed in other ways, he's not one to worry and resist. He fends off less irksome anxiety over these matters by way of the same mechanisms by which he denies the greater but non-conscious dread of existential destruction.

However, as Rank pointed out, regardless of a person's *heroic* commitment to their life and culture, they remain humans inhabiting the Eigenwelt or subjective space which is their ontological status and not a matter of choice. The main constituent of the subjective world is the Will, as Rank called it. It comes into existence partly as an unconscious or semi-conscious reaction to the overwhelming gravitational pull, so to speak, of nature, the force which not only

gives life but threatens each lifeform with death and impediment at every turn. This is loosely consistent with Schelling's ideas on identity. Even though nature's laws are those of fixed necessity, nature apparently permits a space for something free to exist. Schelling was the philosopher who addressed this primordial mystery. Like Heidegger, Rank simply took this for granted and focused on humans as cultural rather than spiritual beings.

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854). See the schellingzone website for more on the great philosopher's life and ideas.

The human is a being because of nature, but a *Self* because of culture. Like nature, culture is the given and certain fact, regardless of how primitive that culture and its citizens are. Culture exists because of the many Selves or predecessors that lived, loved and worked before one's time. It is the medium in which one moves, and by which one manages to intensify their existence. The interaction and interchange between Self and culture is not wholly objectified. It happens for the most part on the non-conscious level, and involves the entire being – the body as well as the mind. Rank was fascinated by the dynamics between Selves and the cultures they give rise to consciously and non-consciously.

As far as Rank was concerned, the so-called "unconscious" was not as Freud, Jung and other prominent psychologists conceived it. It is not an interior space full of repressions and archetypes inaccessible to the

conscious agent. It is not a dark psychic attic full of specters and debris loath to be exposed to the light of consciousness. On the contrary, instead of it being a pure phenomenon of mind, it is the content of the world as yet unknown and unexperienced by mind. That's right, for Rank the world and its content is the unconscious. This makes sense, since an experienced thing – the tasting of a new kind of food or a newly developed skill – becomes conscious after it is experienced. This implies, clearly and distinctly, that one is unconscious of it before the experience occurs in time. We see then that Rank's unconscious is a purely phenomenological affair. His focus was not on the interior of the mind, but on the exterior world of which man is a part and in which he is contained. The subject meets this and that object or entity and has experiences with them. These serve to change his being, hour by hour, day by day, year after year. They can serve to fragment the psyche and overwhelm the Self, but can also stimulate the Will along productive lines, activating the controverting force, which coalesces and strengthens Selfhood. Indeed, it is the Will that brings culture about, and in turn the cultural elements impact consciousness, attracting and inspiring it to engage, participate and advance the culture. The rapport only breaks down if the individual has not been made curious about his culture, and if he finds himself in a society of uncreative, valueless, passive deviants.

The man who from childhood on has been actively engaged with his culture, already has his work assigned for him by that culture. In other words man is already employed. As an inventor, musician, poet, artist, artisan, architect or industrialist, he is bound to add to the cache of cultural elements and to improve previously fashioned elements still in an imperfect state. In this way he heroically takes responsibility for the world left to him by men like himself. He tends their gardens and makes sure their legacy is not defiled and rendered meaningless.

The Will expresses itself in two main ways. It expresses itself on a natural or biological level, as sexuality and the automatic drive to procreate. As Rank says, this is one way man not only pleasures but *immortalizes* himself. He breeds the new generation and by so doing perpetuates himself genetically. Intriguingly, the Will also expresses itself culturally or artistically. By creating things, man immortalizes himself. He works with the expectation that his creations will last through time or at least be revivified and valued by descendants engaged in a similar way with their culture. However, if we live in a society that considers sexuality and creativity suspect and subversive, we find our active rapport with culture impeded. This was the travesty that particularly worried William Blake, who understood that the Poetic Genius, as he called creative man, must not shackle his

imagination. Blake's quarrel was with oppressive institutions such as the Church and State, entities concerned less with freedom and heroic creativity than with the fear and dread that ontologically underlie these proclivities. Religion was for Blake the number one enemy of creative genius and of culture. In his work he elucidated the many ways religious institutions and doctrines fragment consciousness, repress desire, and reward conformity and mediocrity. Like Heidegger and Rank, Blake did not look to any supposed reality beyond the human and cultural. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* he wrote "All deities reside in the human breast." And in his *Everlasting Gospel* we read: "Thou art man, God is no more, Thine own Humanity learn to adore."

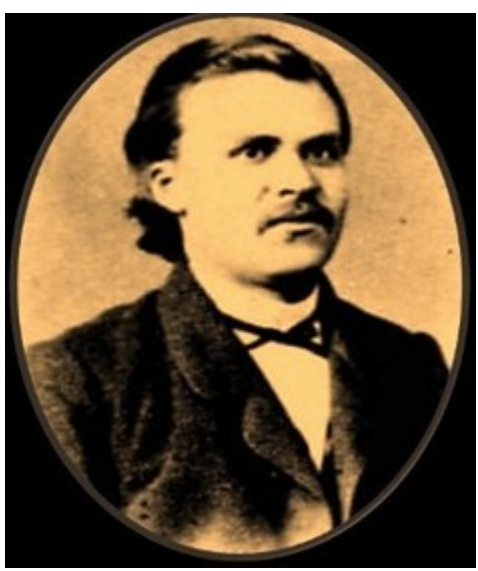
English mystic, poet and artist William Blake (1757-1827)

In other words if the Mitwelt and Umwelt are dysfunctional the Eigenwelt will be malformed and deviant. If parents and society are anxious, shallow, decadent and sense-infatuated, the culture suffers and cannot nourish incoming Selves. Selves are thereby unable to mature correctly, unable to centrovert and intensify their existence. Their subjectivity is not a true expression of the creative Will but an artifact of the corrupting unheroic influence of parents and society.

Corrupting influences subvert healthy growth in all sorts of ways. Once they are embodied, man does not have a realistic Self-image. Consequently, as Blake elaborately showed, he posits gods above and

devils below his station. But as Rank pointed out, that which he flees, and which threatens from below, is only a less evolved, less mature *stage of Selfhood.* That which man wishes to attain, the level of God, is merely that born from the expectation of immortality through cultural works. These are *human* states, fears and aspirations, expressions of the Self as it moves on the mundane collective level. Actually, when taken as independent realities, the phantasmagorias impair healthy development. With his gods above, man is bound to regard himself as relatively low and inadequate. In this state he is, as Blake knew, less human and heroic, his imagination already working under par. The same thing is likely to happen if and when *mortal* men are exalted and lionized.

Moreover, the representatives of religion, those ambassadors of the fantastic, make hay out of man's feelings of inferiority in the face of supposedly superior and immortal deities. It is certainly correct for a person to wish himself to be more, but when he sets beings above his station, he prevents himself from reaching his desired goal. One cannot transcend what one is, one's humanity. A man's accomplishment lies not in becoming godlike, but becoming *more human.* Although the circle of humanity expands for an active and creative Will, it is never stepped beyond or transcended in a supernatural sense. The circumference of the human Will is culture, and the circumference of culture is nature. Man, culture and nature are an interlocking trinity, one part utterly dependent on the other. This is why there can be no hard subjectivity or abstraction, no explicit Cartesian dualism.



Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). The Overman or Superman is for Otto Rank a

spurious concept. Rank was wary of inflated and projected human imagos. As far as he was concerned, the gods work as symbols of cultural immortality, and should not be regarded as supernatural beings. Nietzsche's Superman is not a supernatural being but an inflated and unrealistic archetype under which ordinary humans must feel small and inadequate. Rank would probably have noted the same flaw in the beliefs of modern-day Christian atheists, who, rejecting God, exalt Jesus as the perfect model of humanity. Unlike Schelling, Rank downplayed the metaphysical, but endorsed the *theological* as a necessary mode of human cultural expression. In this regard his ideas are akin to those of the Danish Existentialist Soren Kierkegaard.

As Blake and Schelling knew, nature cannot therefore be considered blind and mechanical. And neither are the mind and body merely animalistic. The human is not bound solely by laws of necessity. Nor is man necessarily "struggling" against the natural order. On the contrary, man and his will are emanations of nature's necessary law. Certainly there is at the foundation of our being an ontological fear of nature. But that fear is quite rational. It serves as the root and origin of the Will that strives against it. On a basic level we know that nature, with a sweep of her hand, might erase every human edifice and institution forever. For all our industry, for all the millennia of effort to construct and improve, there is always the danger of fast and final obliteration. However, instead of being frozen with fear over this fact, the Will negates this possibility and continues its creative engagement. Rank saw that the Will rejects this impoverishing fear and denies the facts of death and decay. The nucleus of the Will is this rejection of fear and inaction. And it is this nucleus of resoluteness that constitutes the centroverting force that allows us to know and experience ourselves as articulated biographical Selves through time.

If there is a "struggle" in the sense asserted by Hobbes and other physicalists, it is not with nature, but with a society that obstructs or prevents holistic relationships between Eigenwelt, Mitwelt and Umwelt. It is the struggle against the all too human forces that deem it taboo to experience sexual and creative pleasure, the rewards offered by a healthy culture to men of culture. It is against a society that seeks to reduce people to a herd-mentality, where will-less men live as selfless duty-bound automatons. Rank thought that duty was important, just as he and Schelling before him knew that freedom and virtue are important. But the duty one has toward society can't be born from oppression and blind subservience. Man can't serve culture as a subordinate entity. He must improve his culture pridefully, realizing that he and his offspring are the primary beneficiaries of what he creates. He works *heroically* because he knows that as the last man standing, so to speak, he is the custodian, guardian and perfecter of his forebear's cultural bequests. As the beneficiary of the past, he is the defier of death and decay, as others will be who follow him.

As Blake emphasized, the hard materialism of physicalists and scientists is an irrational consequence of the objectification of the gods. When and if we posit the supernatural, we confound the parameters and capacities of reason and open a space for men to vehemently reject the phantasmagorias we conjure. Blake had no time for the religious man or the materialist. Both were victims of the "Newtonian Sleep," and Sons of Urizen, inwardly shaking with fear over the underlying reality of death. Their rigid one-size-fits-all structures and ideologies are symptoms of this pervasive but repressed fear which impinges upon and inhibits the true Will or Poetic Genius that must deafen itself to its everlasting dirge. One irrational contingent demotes nature (or Umwelt), regarding it as an indifferent mechanical artifact, while the other contingent inflates and personifies human consciousness, assuming a rarefied realm of forms, archetypes or gods. Consequently the Will finds itself pinned between two malignant forces with which it must struggle in order to continue expressing itself freely. It is caught between the congenitally decadent, anxious, oppressive society and the inner fear of indifferent destructive nature. The Blakean-Rankian Artist rejects and overcomes both impositions, whereas the colonized mind becomes anxious, docile and uncreative. The inauthentic *das man,* doesn't want to rock the boat as he attempts to steer a course through the churning waters he fears will sooner or later engulf him. He becomes a Son of Urizen and signs on for the subordinate existence offered him by the gods and their terrestrial agents. He also endorses the work of society's hyper-efficient experts, the "Newtons" supposed to provide answers to those pesky existential questions, and make his banal existence safer, cleaner, brighter, faster and happier. Of course man's ontological fear of nature transmogrifies into fear of the State and/or of God. However, if belief in the Sky Father does not suit the slave's temperament he bows instead before an earthly Big Brother in order be placated and rewarded. As Blake said, he gives up the crooked roads of imagination for the straight roads of invention. As a result he remains hungry and desperate for whatever illusions (or Mysteria) his overlords hand down for his consumption and edification. In this sorry state he will remain as long as fear is the basis of his Will, Self-image, identifications and beliefs.

For Blake, Heidegger and Rank, the noumenal – as described by Immanuel Kant – isn't irrevocably eclipsed and unknowable. It is simply nature, the ground from which human existence and culture arise. At some primordial level the natural laws of necessity and the Will of man meet and conjoin. But the place is dark and rationally unknowable to man. If it is conceived it is by intuition and

imagination, which in turn compel one to express the numinous in art of some kind. In any case, for Blake the eternal or infinite isn't a supernatural and unknowable phenomenon. It is a cultural or aesthetic phenomenon to be intimately and rapturously experienced by each and every Will. As Rank pointed out, culture is endless and can never be completed and exhausted. The elements of culture are there to eternally enrich, and to be perpetually added to by an individual's Will. If one were to live for thousands of years, there would still be things to learn, know and create. The rapport between the Will and culture is therefore *phenomenologically* eternal. When the Will creates, it does so to further creativity not destruction. Only in a deviant anxiety-ridden society will a person be bound to disengage and become schizophrenically docile and neurotic. Instead of Willfully negating the fear that underlies freedom and creative activity, he succumbs to it, and thereby accepts the panaceas for that fear offered by his Machiavellian misleaders. In this way he blocks his own progress as well as that of other people. The consequences of this psychophobia and self-abandonment are devastating for the future of civilization.

The Establishment galvanizes its control over minds by way of the media. Generating anxiety regresses the Will to a primitive level, thereby forcing people into lockstep with the powers-that-be. In this way positive cultural development is arrested and the way opened for contaminating forces to enter.

In the sane society, people step out of each others way because each individual understands that his fellows are engaged in a similar process to his own. They are involved in heroically exercising their Will to enhance and advance culture, and should not be imposed upon. If civilization is to continue growing positively it must be kept free of deviant influences that seek to invade, control and contaminate. Forces that impede and subvert the Will must be countered and banished. In this way the Self is free to mature and

intensify. The centroverting force is not compromised and the person is not inhibited from positively changing and developing with every new experience.

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Like Rank, Hegel and Heidegger, Blake's interest was the origin and structure of man and his culture. For Blake, man was Artist pure and simple. Everything man creates and that becomes part of the cultural archive comes into existence because of man's fundamental creative Will. Rank would have agreed with this. But as we have seen, Rank's Will is born from underlying fear. Its origin is the heroically exclaimed "NO" to finitude and nature's destructive power. It is the compulsion, both biological and cultural, to negate death's finality.

For Schelling, Rank's conception of the origins of Selfhood and culture would not have been regarded as wholly sound. He would have doubted the etiology of culture as described by Rank and atheistic or apatheistic thinkers of his kind. He would agree that man does indeed harbor subconscious fear of nature's destructive power, and has long sought to shield himself against it. He would agree that culture is, in one sense, man's refuge from the dread of death. But he would also have asked Rank to explain the existence not only of culture, but of man as man, in his state of pure being. Before cultural man, there was natural man, and he was not, as most atheists are inclined to think, a blank slate or shivering fear-ridden wreck. Schelling might also want to know where the Umwelt came from. Where did the raw biological structure that undergirds consciousness come from? After all, for culture of any sort to come about, it must be overlaid on the biological structure that somehow supports and sustains it. That preconscious strata of numinous comprehension undergirding and preceding consciousness must be logically accounted for. One can refer to it as the racial memory, but how did it come about? What are its roots? Each man's personal consciousness is articulated to an unseen cache of ancestral gnosis, the phylogenetic legacy of history. Is it all merely the result of man's psychological fear of nature? That is basically the position of the average atheist, given that he is sophisticated enough to think along these lines. Of course we have the theories of Carl Jung, but his etiology of the unconscious did not suit Rank, and might not have suited Blake let alone Schelling. For Jung the unconscious can be a deadly place full of properties or forces that can overwhelm and annihilate the ego. Blake did not think of the unconscious in this way. Few poets do. But this is not the place to discuss Jung's ideas on the unconscious.

For Schelling, it does not matter that Rank can insert his atheistic theory right at the beginning of human time. Whether the fear of nature lies at the root of modern man's consciousness, or whether it was there at the root of the first man's consciousness, does not mean it is the primary drive that set culture in motion and gave rise to sophisticated Selves. Was there not another equally valid and important factor present for consciousness, irrespective of historical time? Was their not, alongside man's fear of nature, man's raw appreciation of nature's overwhelming beauty? In my *Disciples of the Mysterium* book I elucidated the *aesthetic sensibility* that was a factor for man from the outset, showing that wherever the fear of nature makes an appearance, the aesthetic sensibility is inevitably right there alongside it. As far as Schelling and other German Romantics were concerned, the origin of human culture might be found in this sensibility, as much as it is said to be found in a legitimate fear of nature. In fact, the origins of culture are from one perspective more likely to be grounded in the aesthetic sensibility. After all, as Rank knew, culture is chock full of artworks expressing the world's beauty. We concede that the beauty in art is often naive and romanticized. To be sure it is a view of nature from the safe confines of culture. But that does not compromise the basic position taken by Schelling, that there is something other than fear undergirding culture and being. Art expresses man's earliest awareness and acknowledgement of the explicit beauty of the world in which he found himself, a beauty he eventually discerned within his own body. The ancient Irish, Egyptians and Greeks not only discovered the inherent geometric order implicit in nature, but in the human form. Their buildings and art is not therefore an expression of their fear of nature, but of their admiration of it. It was born from awe and reverence. Later, after the rise of culture the expressions develop and widen in scope and form. However, cultural elements can work for or against the Artist and his aesthetic sensibility. This was Blake's concern. It was also Freud's. In fact many sages noted that as culture develops the aesthetic sensibility weakens and recedes in urbanized man. In the end he lives in a world of plastic flowers and digital representations of gardens, lakes and mountains. His wallpaper looks like a library and his bedspread has clouds on it. Neck-deep in skateboards, video-games, iPods and bungee-cords, he forgets to present an actual flower to his kids.

Reality as simulacra. Heidegger was one of the first thinkers to warn us about the utlra-mechanization of action and vision. As a phenomenologist he warned that we can't even be sure of the reality we experience everyday let alone of some implausible disembodied reality handed to us by theologians and metaphysicians. We need an intimate vivid re-encounter with *ourselves* and our world, not more supernaturalism and technology.

This decline of culture is not simply the consequence of fear of nature, or of an act of Willful resistance against nature's destructive power. It is more the consequence of the loss of true aesthetic sensibility. So perhaps Schelling was right. Heidegger was certainly open to the idea. And what is more, Heidegger lived most of his days in nature, and enthusiastically encouraged people to do the same. He did so because he endorsed the idea presented here, that it is as much our aesthetic sensibility that forms culture as it is our fear. Apparently the later Heidegger wholly endorsed this idea, and signed off on his academic career insisting that philosophy had nothing more of value to say about existence. It was now up to the artists and poets to direct and improve the culture. A study of ancient history shows us that this was the case for early cultures, such as those of India, Greece, Ireland and Scandinavia, etc.

> *Still, I am conscious now that behind all this beauty, satisfying though it may be, there is some spirit hidden of which the painted forms and shapes are but modes of manifestation, and it is with this spirit that I desire to become in harmony. I have grown tired of the articulate utterances of men and things. The Mystical in Art, the Mystical in Life, the Mystical in Nature this is what I am looking for*

– Oscar Wilde (*De Profundis*)

Nature is certainly inhospitable and dangerous, but also intensely and mysteriously beautiful. Nature's beauty captivated man from the earliest days. The prehistoric artwork found in almost every country proves that beyond doubt. It is an ontological fact and the body itself, on the biological level, responds to it. Beauty is a matter of our fibers, marrow, skin and senses as much as it is of mental consciousness and simple aesthetic appreciation. Nature's beauty, however, is not wholly a sensual matter. Beauty is experienced in dreams, which strangely present themselves as objective realities to the subject. Beauty is also order, the order found in the dimensions and proportions of the human body, a phenomenon known to ancient people. This innate geometrical order links one to nature which also embodies that order. This truism partly led sages such as Schelling to investigate the intimate connections between body, consciousness and nature. From this point of view we see that Kant's Noumenal realm is really the human unconscious that precedes Self-consciousness. We are not able to access it directly or fully, and must not try. We can only open a space for it to express itself freely through consciousness. But we limit the process when we turn to technology to simulate consciousness and nature. When a being becomes Self-conscious it is then that he becomes conscious of the natural world. A door is opened and another closed. Kant's Noumenal is simply the *preceding* inaccessible state or reality. Schelling and Rank knew better. Everything we *create* personally and culturally is the consequence or emanation of this supposedly Noumenal realm – of the unconscious Will. In other words the Will itself is Kant's Noumenon.

Like Freud, who came after him, Schelling understood that we must explain the aberrant institutions that crop up in modern cultures. As we said above, we have the fear within of nature's destructiveness, that predates the rise of culture (and which may, as Rank thought, give rise to culture), and we have the *theological* – or projection of supernatural realms and beings to supposedly offer guidance and reward for cultural work well done. We also have, for the less religious man, the busy scientists working to supposedly "improve" our

world and lives. Of course Blake saw the problems and dangers long before Freud's time. He also questioned *why* ostensibly wholesome thriving cultures erect from within themselves institutions and systems which threaten their own existence. Blake's entire life project was to explain this mystery. And explain it he certainly did.

We see that something must have gone wrong from the outset, otherwise it is not possible for deviant antihuman institutions to grow out of cultures only to subvert and destroy them. If such destructive edifices exist, as we know they do, we must uncover their origins. Schelling may have directed us correctly, suggesting that at some point along the way, the fear of nature eclipsed the aesthetic sensibility. Blake would certainly have agreed. Indeed, he pointed to the advent of Judeo-Christianity as a definite consequence of this declination. Proof of the point is in front of our eyes. When we look around today we see that nature plays only a minor role in most people's lives. Usually it is a simulacra of nature that one is in touch with. This travesty was predicted by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard who saw that the more plastic and artificial man's culture becomes, the more plastic and artificial man himself becomes. His worries were shared by many sages, and warnings went out from Goethe, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Freud, Jung, Fromm, Heidegger, Foucault, Barfield, Tolkien, and other thinkers concerned with the fate of Western culture.

Rank's conception of the unconscious would also only have been partially acceptable to Schelling. He may have liked Rank's view when it came to his explanation of the unconscious as being equivalent with as yet unexperienced cultural phenomena. That theory would not have contradicted Schelling's ideas on the relationship between man and culture. It certainly would not have upset Hegel, whose ideas on this subject are closely akin to those of Rank. Nevertheless Schelling would have reminded Rank that the unconscious is also the psychic repository of the ancestral archive in which the phylogenetic fear of nature and aesthetic sensibility are recorded. These enfolded or implicate memories predate the rise of culture, and as we have seen also constitute the Will which in turn inaugurated culture. It is therefore unlikely that the aberrant features of culture, as delineated above, originate from the aesthetic sensibility. It is the higher principles and features of culture that originate with our awe and respect for nature's beauty, not its malignant ones. They arise from the regressive fear of nature, manifested as it is in neurotic types whose Will is drowned in non-conscious anxiety. The repugnant features also arise from the influence of the oppressive State, itself an embodiment of fear. The State's representatives are, more often than not, the

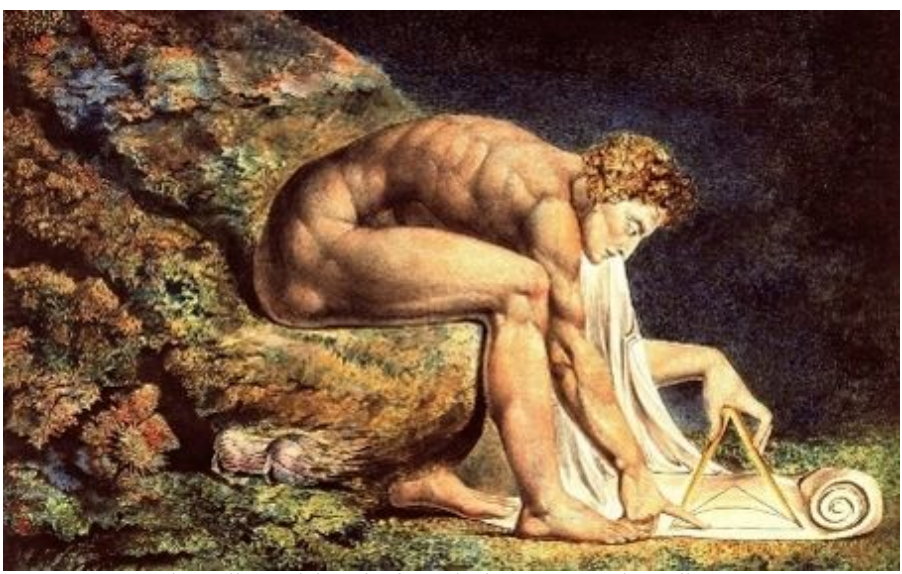
parents who bring their offspring up unaware of nature's beauty and majesty. In children of this kind the fear of nature is the rule, and the love of nature the exception.

As Heidegger, Rilke, Nietzsche and Blake knew, the return to nature – and reawakening of the aesthetic sensibility – is not by any means a collective process and experience. It is not something shared but deeply personal. This accounts for why it is profoundly threatening to the status quo and representatives of Church and State. It means freedom, purity of creativity and Willful expression. It means the awakening of conscience and adherence to the directives not of the State but of the Imperial Self. It means the restoration of authentic virtuousness, which inevitably leads to true understanding about non-virtuous immoral and amoral systems and entities. That deepening of insight in turn means the end of evil in all its perfidious manifestations.

Yes, as far as Schelling would have been concerned, we cannot trace the origins of culture or man exclusively back to the fear of nature's destructiveness. That fear is certainly a major factor in existence, but the aesthetic sensibility is to be found as its twin, in every time and place, phylogenetically and ontogenetically. Of course Schelling can then go on to ask the atheist where beauty originates. How did it come into existence and why? That is what his "Nature Philosophy" explains, and why his exemplary philosophy, like that of his German philosophical contemporaries and predecessors, has been downplayed and grossly misinterpreted through the years. He was aware that nature (the Umwelt) is the ground or origin of man and culture, but for all its destructiveness, nature is not the origin of the aberrant and regressive elements within culture. They arise not because of nature and man's aesthetic sensibility – the response to nature's majesty and beauty – but because of man's *lack* of aesthetic temperament. And that is the consequence of man's fearful attempts to incarcerate himself behind and under city walls, florescent lighting and sanitized offices and tower blocks. Man does not see that by banishing the Umwelt he impoverishes the Mitwelt and Eigenwelt, thereby plunging himself and his culture into a pathological state. As man becomes increasingly dissociated and neurotic, he comes to rely on the traditional "saviors" – namely the Church and State, which have always worked independently and in unison to exploit man's existential predicaments and fallout. In the end it is these oppressive antihuman institutions that dictate what sanity and normalcy are. They direct an incoming Self toward what they deem to be his purpose. As Foucault and others warned, the death of individuality is at hand, and once the simulacra-dependent human comes to dominate, the only "culture" to exist will

be that which owes no debt to the past.

The Blakean Artist is aware of this. He notes and tracks the corruption within culture and society, and understands how it comes about. He also knows what needs to be done. As the decline continues and conditions around him worsen he revolts against his corrupt culture and returns to nature, the ultimate ground of his creative Will. He encourages others to do the same. However, he knows that a fear-based psyche is, for the most part, incapable of reawakening the aesthetic sensibility or cultivating a sincere and deep relationship with nature. After all, it was fear of nature that partly inaugurated culture, and therefore the cultured man is not inclined to respect nature as much as he does culture. He gets lost in the latter to shield himself from the former. This is not the case with the Blakean Artist, who takes refuge in nature to avoid being consumed by culture, particularly when the latter is in steep intellectual and moral decline. This was the case with Holderlin, Rilke, Wordsworth, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Emerson, Jung, Barfield, and a few other savants. Men of this caliber knew that if culture is founded entirely on a Will based in fear, revolt against it would be impossible. It would not even exist as a proclivity or possibility. Indeed for fear-based men it doesn't exist as a possibility.



Newton, by William Blake. The fear which constitutes the Will gives rise to culture and its many elements, but also to science and religion of the dehumanizing kind. These institutions and paradigms in turn confound the Poetic Genius which is rooted in the aesthetic sensibility. The Imagination is eclipsed by institutionalized mechanistic Reason, and the "doors of perception" slammed shut. The priests and scientists are then expected to provide answers to the mysteries of existence. As Blake shows, Newton sits absorbed in some scientific problem, hoping to solve some conundrum. He is, however, naked and

seated at the bottom of the ocean. He is, in effect, drowned in an ocean of self-deceit and Mysteria, of which he knows nothing.

Blake spoke eloquently and profoundly of a "fearful symmetry" because he knew all there was to know about the two opposing but ofttimes colluding leviathans that can eventually obliterate freedom and culture. He knew that Church and State, priests and politicians, work hand-in-hand to incarcerate minds as well as bodies. He knew that under their hands man's ontological fear of nature will eventually rise to pathological dimensions, thereby compromising the fragile sanity of individuals and the order of society. Like Otto Rank and Sigmund Freud, Blake knew that in malignant societies the underlying antipathy toward nature drives man to install vile oppressive systems and misleaders to guide him in all things. And he was right in his predictions and worries. The blueprints for the Orwellian dystopia have been drafted and are ready for people's approval. "Work will make you free" was the motto above the Auschwitz workhouse, and above the coming bastille of the so-called New World Order we will probably find a similar motto, although this time it is likely to read "Work will make you free of freedom."

> *Tyger, Tyger, burning bright, In the forests of the night; What immortal hand or eye, Dare frame thy fearful symmetry* – William Blake (*The Tyger*)

CHAPTER FIVE
The Fall of Albion: Of Shadows, Gods and Selves

Imagination is the real and eternal world, of which this vegetable world is merely a shadow – William Blake

What happens to us when we face the inevitability of death? We might not think a lot happens. Death is just the end of living and there's absolutely nothing we can do about it. We have control over some things and almost no control over a lot more. But when it comes to death, we have no power to prevent its arrival. What we normally tend to do is forget about death and pretend it won't happen to us.

According to Otto Rank this is precisely what ancient man chose to do with the reality of death as it appeared to him in his time. Perhaps, thought Rank, ancient man's rude denial of death wasn't a wholly volitional act, but was probably a non-conscious denial of death's finality. In any case the negation constituted the basis of what Rank referred to as the Will, the underlying, omnidirectional lifeforce animating human beings. In other words the libido or energy of man already has a preset distinction and orientation – namely the *denial of death.*

As far as humans are concerned, a great deal has changed through the generations. Psychically, modern man bears little resemblance to his ancient forefathers, and Rank was fascinated with the differences between the two specimens. He was a profoundly transgressive thinker and perceptively critical of most of the institutions and systems of modernity. In this sense he was the intellectual brother of Blake. His critiques of society are in many respects similar to those of the great English poet and artist. One field of which Rank was particularly critical was psychoanalysis. He did not endorse the systems and techniques of Freud, Jung, Adler or any other prominent analyst. His own system was called Will Therapy. Rank's approach with clients differed from Freud's because he did not emphasize or dwell on the client's past. On the contrary, he preferred to know about the client's present Self-image, relationships, hopes, conflicts and doubts, etc. Rank coached therapists to engender an informal atmosphere and to understand that their client was teaching them as much as they were teaching the client. This ensured a less stuffy and hierarchical situation in therapy, and thereby less transference and

counter-transference. It also led to greater progress for the client, since he did not get the feeling that he was intellectually or emotionally inferior to the therapist. For Rank it was essential that both the client and therapist remained conscious of the many changes and discoveries happening to them as sessions proceeded. Importantly, in Will Therapy a client is dissuaded from taking refuge in the past, thereby avoiding the failings, struggles and conflicts of the present. He is made to see that his present troubles exist as gateways to change and must not be dodged and minimized. Ultimately the client is introduced to the power of his own Will so he fearlessly and proactively takes charge of his life.

By way of his particular technique Rank could analyze a person or a society based on how its Will expressed itself. Historically speaking Rank postulated that the Will had passed through three distinct "incarnations" or stages. There was the presexual age, the sexual age, and the psychological or religious age. In each age man was, psychologically speaking, a markedly different being. His relationship with himself, other people and nature was not the same as each age came and went. Each person living today embodies these three stages or ages, ontogenetically. The historical timeline or chronology exists within each of our psyches like layers of sediment, one on top of the other. Any man or woman can find themselves, for whatever reason, mentally and emotionally functioning for a time on one or more of these levels, although most people are fixated at the uppermost level, coterminous with the modern or religious age. What we refer to as "culture" is the product of the Will as it moved from the first to the third age. As far as Rank was concerned the movement has not necessarily led to wholly favorable or productive outcomes for humanity. But he was not one to pass judgment or morally evaluate the outcomes of the Will. For him the Will's evolution through time is a phenomenon and mystery unto itself. Its movement is the essence both of becoming and being human. Like Schopenhauer, Rank knew it was futile and inappropriate to morally assess the Will which was in its earliest incarnation beyond good and evil. The Will is *action* pure and simple. It is biological and also psychological activity in a basic unequivocal sense. The Will moves forward, or progresses, but can also become static and regressive.

LEFT: William Blake (1757-1827). RIGHT: Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was the German atheist philosopher who first introduced Eastern mystical ideas to the West. He was also an exponent of the Philosophy of the Will. His ideas would not have been acceptable to Schelling who was despised by the vain, cantankerous Schopenhauer.

Indeed morality, as we understand it, manifested at a later stage in the development of the Will, and did not exist during the first presexual age. Rank had much to say about this early phase of being and emphasized the importance of two particular mysteries experienced by ancient man when he was fixated at this stage. The first mystery was sleep and the second was dreams. Because of the special quality of experience at this stage, Rank attributed the terms "spiritual" and "magical" to this era. However, we are not to ascribe a supernatural connotation to these terms. For Rank they describe very physical or phenomenological experiences. As we said, the fear of death and denial of death constitute the Will or life-force of man. Therefore, when sleep came upon man of an evening, the state subconsciously reminded him of death. In other words sleep was troublesomely experienced as a "little death." Consequently the Will counteracted the sleeper's passivity and anxiety by doing what it does best, that is by *acting*. As a result the sleeper experienced *dreams*. They are not born from repressions or Archetypes, as Freud and Jung believed, and are not, according to Rank, necessarily worth analyzing. This is because they are simply more *living* – more thinking, feeling, sensing and experiencing. They are mental noise, as it were, proving to the sleeper that he has not actually died by lying down in his nightly simulation of death. The Will is life and life is action. That action exists in the mental space manifesting as dreams and fantasies. Its action is referred to by Blake as Imagination. It is the spontaneous welling forth of images and endless lifelike scenarios, each of which exist to enliven

one and counter the dread of extinction and nothingness. The dreamer sees and talks to people and has all manner of experiences. He appears in his own dream as himself. But when he does so he acts autonomously without being consciously directed. The Dream-Self has a life of his own. This simulacra of oneself within a dream gave rise to the concept Rank refers to as the "Double." It also gave rise to the concept of immortality. When dead people appeared in a dream, the dreamer was bound to conceive of them as immortals. When the Double acted autonomously, the dreamer was bound to regard it as an atemporal being inhabiting a special, mysterious, non-physical dimension. Since the activities and scenarios were internal, however, we see that the Double and the space he or she inhabits are not to be considered supernatural in the traditional sense. On the contrary, the dream state is a tangible phenomenon experienced in the here and now.

The concept of the Double or Doppelganger turns up in numerous fictional books and films. It is often incorporated subliminally, as in commercials for such companies as Wrigleys and Braun, etc. It is alluded to when we see what appears to be conventional unassuming reflections in mirrors or in similar looking characters. Movies such *It's a Wonderful Life, The Prince and the Pauper, The Man in the Iron Mask, The Ninth Gate, ET, Meet Joe Black, Twins, The Mask, The Incredible Hulk, Bat Man, Spiderman, The Werewolf, Lord of the Rings, A Fist Full of Dollars, Orphee, The Scapegoat, Dead Ringer,* etc, feature insinuated Double motifs.

The second mystery that came about as a consequence of the first was man's commitment to reenact in reality and in time that which his Double enacted in the dream. For the dreamer the Double was an instructor or daemon. Whatever could be successfully reenacted and replicated in the wake-world had to be executed as perfectly as possible by the dreamer. In this way he and his world took on the pattern of the dream world. The dreamer attempted to mirror the actions of his Double, and thereby secure for himself the immortality enjoyed by his Double or Ka-Self, as it was known in ancient Egypt. Rank believed that this synergy between inner and outer worlds

occurred for men who had no concept of duality, causality or morality as we understand them today. Man did not recognize duality because the content of the *inner* world was carefully replicated in the physical world. He did not recognize causality because the cause of his thought and action was the immortal Double which existed *within* his own being. In other words the dreamer's external world or reality did not motivate his thought and action, at least not that of true importance to him. In effect, man as dreamer was his own cause and effect. And he did not function as a moral agent because the activity and counsel of his Double (or inner Self) was not deemed good or bad by the dreamer. He simply executed the deeds or instructions of the Double purely, directly, and as closely as he was able. This occurred because, of course, the dreamer was not intellectually aware that his dreams were an expression of his Will, that was in turn a reaction against the ontological fear of death. No, for the dreamer there was only the actuality of dream activity and the unspoken law that directed him to replicate a particular dream scenario in waking life. He did not attach valuations of good and evil to his actions. That was to come at a later stage in the evolution of the Will. By way of his reenactments man found his life's purpose and meaning. His *acts* made him heroic and guaranteed his own immortality.

We see that this early stage deserves to be referred to as "spiritual," even if it is in a phenomenological sense. The inner and the outer realities were, to all intents and purposes, *one*. The external realm – the Umwelt – was in accord with the inner world or Eigenwelt. Nature was infused and animated with dream beings and scenarios, and man's psychic world harmonized with his physical world. On a foundational level this is still the case for modern man, although he is for the most part psychologically dissociated from that ancestral stage of experience. If he is told that a man in a white beard parted the waves of a sea he will laugh. His predecessor of the Dream Age had no problem accepting it as real. If we accept such scenarios it is only as they exist *fictionally* in the movies or on T.V. Are we, therefore, so different from our forebears after all?

The synergy between inner and outer worlds was, however, never perfect. One encountered numerous problems reenacting dream scenarios in the real world. One could only approximate what they dreamed. Rank tells us that the excess that was not sufficiently replicated, manifested itself on the verbal level as stories and songs. These in turn became the heroic sagas, myths and legends we are familiar with. Their ultimate source is the dream world. By way of the story, man conjured a Dream-Self to accompany him in his worldly adventures. The knight who came riding, the princess awakened by a

kiss, the pilgrim setting out on his quest, are to be seen as embodiments of the storyteller himself and those listening to him. According to Rank, man in the Dream Age was in effect a "Body-Soul." (A child at play is the closest recognizable approximation.) He and the Double walked abroad and did heroic things as the latter instructed. Some adventures were carried out in a wholly physical manner, while others were pure fantasy. This is why the great myths and legends – of Gilgamesh, Hercules, King Arthur, etc – have a fantastic component. The mythical dimension of the dream was, however, to the teller of the tale, as real as the physical outplaying of it.

Great heroic myths and legends were utterances and emanations of the dream world. During the Mythic Age, a man's dreams guided and infused his world. Since the Mythic stage of being preceded the rise of ego-consciousness, we can never intellectually discern what existence in that period was truly like. Although thought is a symptom of the Will, the latter manifests primarily not in thought but pure action. This fact was repeatedly emphasized by Blake, Schelling and Heidegger.

Rank also notes that at the ancestral mythical or magical *presexual* stage men did not know about their role in conception and pregnancy. They had not connected the sexual act with childbirth. Historically it was women who first discerned man's role in this. Rank hints that even after men came to recognize their role, they were inclined to deny it. The reasons had to do with immortality again. In the presexual age men believed that children were born because of the intervention of a spirit. Indeed a newborn child may itself have been the reincarnation of a deceased ancestor. Women were therefore portals between the physical and spiritual planes. They were gateways through which the dead returned to life. And living men believed they too would after their own deaths stand a chance of returning in the same manner. Indeed, ancient men at this stage of development did

not acknowledge death by way of "natural causes." Death for them was always the result of the intervention of evil intent on the part of a human or otherworldly being or force. This led men to perform rites to the dead, in order to appease the spirits and not bring curses or "bad will" upon their heads. Over time man naturally saw that death occurs anyway, despite what private or tribal rituals were performed. Eventually the presexual age gave way to the sexual age, at which point men realized that individual death could not be prevented. Henceforth immortality was not a personal but collective affair. In other words, after man discovered his role in conception and childbirth, he understood that his immortality was guaranteed through his offspring. As a result his image of himself and his role in the tribe changed significantly, and his estimation of women also differed. Instead of thinking of a woman as having been impregnated by a spirit, ancestor or god, man saw that *he* – a mortal – was responsible. More crucially, Rank shows that, with this new understanding, man moved one step away from the authority of the dream world and Double. Originally they served as the first affirmations of personal immortality, but thereafter that affirmation was sex and family life.

Once men grasped what it meant to be fathers, in the true sense of the word, their understanding of their gods changed forever. Before they had knowledge of the mystery of conception they did not conceive of and relate to their totemic deities as "fathers." After their newfound understanding they did relate to them as heavenly or spiritual progenitors. The concept of fatherhood may have started as a physical fact, but soon thereafter it was transferred to a spiritual dimension. This in turn changed man himself, who was no longer on an equal footing with his tutelary deity or deities. He was no longer the embodiment and agent of the god, Higher Self, or Double within him, but a supplicant at the feet of an external authority. Like Blake, Rank saw that by transferring the physical fact to the spiritual, in the external sense, the latter was exalted in a way it had not been before. The presexual stage was essentially a "spiritual" age to be sure, but the sexual age became spiritualized in a negative sense, at a time when men willingly enslaved themselves to their externalized gods who became the progenitors of man and the tribe, physically and spiritually. Rank saw the Garden of Eden scene as a rendition of this transition from the presexual to sexual epoch. Adam's sin was in thinking he could attain immortality in other ways than by obeying the dictates of Jehovah. According to Genesis it was this presumption that caused the Fall.

Before man knew what fatherhood was, he was not inclined to anthropomorphize (or humanize) his tutelary deities. They were frequently conceived of theriomorphically, that is in animal form. This was during an age when man's thinking and feeling was more sensitive to the ways to nature. Indeed, as Rank pointed out in other works, the gods were originally nothing more than anthropomorphized and exalted physical shadows caused by the light of the sun. Shadows had long held a fascination for ancient man, who believed they had lives of their own when they were not visible. The supposed shadow realm was eventually transmogrified into the spiritual realm, in both a heavenly and hadean sense.

With the advent of the sexual collectivized epoch, man found himself the progenitor of the next generation and patriarch of the tribe, a status he had not previously enjoyed. Because of these changes he egoistically sought to maintain the new status quo. It was at this time that the matriarchal elements of civilization began to be downplayed and in some cases abandoned altogether. Man himself, not the Double, became the guide of the tribe. Of course the role of the Double was finally assumed by the tribal shaman, as it would later be assumed by the holy man and priest. The priests moved to set up their churches and eventually inaugurate the religious age. By this time the average man was at least two more steps removed from a truly spiritual or magical communion with himself and the world. Although he had relative dominion over the tribe's women and children, and although as chief or king he directed the destiny of others, he felt relatively subservient to the priest – the counterfeit Double – and his manufactured god on high. This growing sense of inferiority plays a major role in the evolution of the Will, and something had to be done about it. As man's fundamental impotency increased, as he submitted his Will to external authority, he became increasingly anxious, depressed and polarized. He also became more defensive and aggressive. This state of ennui was detected by the priests and to appease man's ego, and canalize his aggression, they championed and permitted his conquest of nature. They presented the Umwelt as the arena or theater in which man would flex his muscle and subdue as he had been subdued. From then on man's relationship with nature drastically altered for the worse. He did exactly as his priests and

"gods" advised, and became an exploiter of nature. He did as his holy books directed and exalted himself as lord over the animals.

> *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground"* – Genesis 1:28

> *The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands* – Genesis 9:2

Man's aberrant relationship with nature parallels his aberrant relationship with himself. This is the point Blake made throughout his superlative works. He knew that man's egregious domination of nature was a consequence of his reduction in ontological status and the shackling of his Imagination. And he knew it was due to the establishment of a pseudo-spiritual realm peopled by superior supernatural beings. Until man reawakens his connection with his lost dream world – the truly sacred Imagination – nothing will change and over time the human condition will further deteriorate. Rank's view was basically in accord with Blake's. However, Rank noted that the advent of psychoanalysis was itself a result of man's spiritual impotency. As said, during the presexual age man did not know morality as we understand it. But when he became the leader of the tribe, taking direction from the priest and his god or gods, he had to begin thinking in terms of good and bad. Causality also played a part for him, since he was bound to consider the reasons for any given course of action and the consequences of it. Fear existed as the basis of his Will but it also manifested within him when he envisioned the anger of his gods toward him for failing in their cause. His actions were for their benefit, first and foremost. When he acted, he did so selflessly and self-sacrificially. To perform badly was to endure rebuke and punishment. So morality and causality finally made their appearance in the human world, and they have been with us ever since the commencement of the sexual age.

In the Genesis account the ire of God is a central theme, as is the guilt of Adam. That guilt and self-doubt, says Rank, eventually gave rise to the priest and confessor, but also to the various schools of psychoanalysis. Preoccupied by, and anxious over his actions and motives for action, man seeks out an "expert" to help him identify the "good" and "evil" thoughts and drives within him. But what is such a man really doing asks Rank. Is he not using his Will to analyze Will?

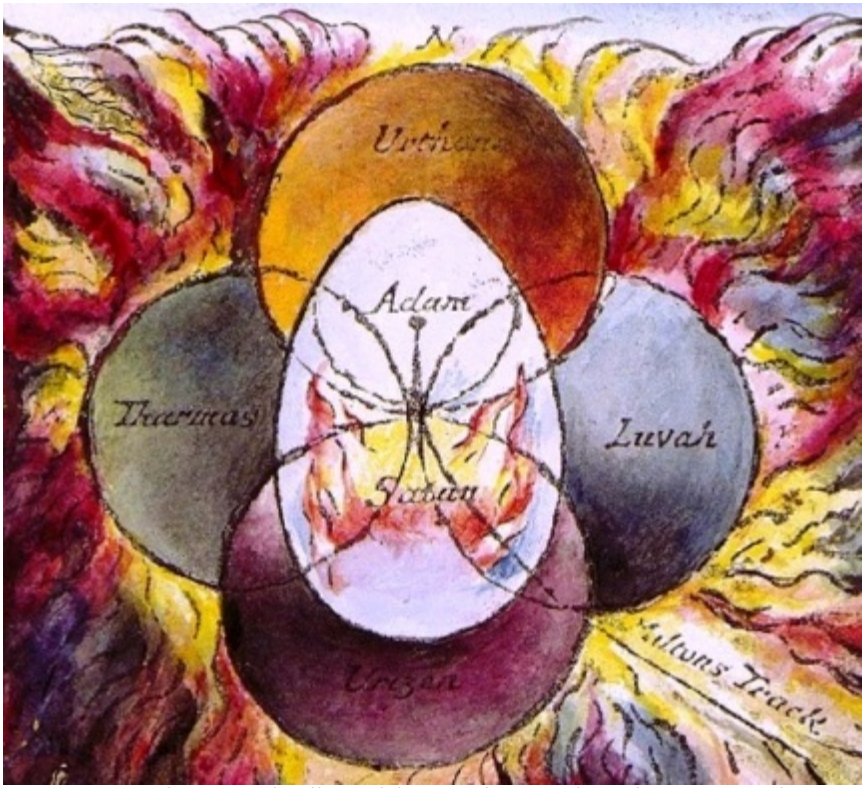
Instead of spontaneously acting, as Blake wanted him to act, man sits passively criticizing his actions. His Will has certainly been turned within, but not in the way it was during the presexual age. It is turned within neurotically, and Will is no longer engaged in productive activity. It is now oriented to apprehend and *analyze* its own nature and activity. Like a snake eating its own tail, the Will analyzes itself until it consumes itself. Will ends by negating Will. What is left asked Rank and Blake. Not much said the latter. What we have in the modern world does not deserve to be called Man. What exists is a self-neutralized automaton without a vital center.

Freud and his school as they were in 1922. On the far left, behind Freud, stands Otto Rank. For many years he was Freud's private secretary, helping to establish the Freudian School and edit Freud's seminal texts. However, two years after this photograph was taken, Rank was forced to break with the Freudians.

In time Rank's personal ideas were rejected by Freud and the two parted company. Upon leaving Freud's fatherly influence Rank suffered a nervous breakdown, as had Jung, Adler and others after their own breaks with Freud. Rank became a perceptive critic of the process of psychoanalysis. Like Blake, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Laing and Szasz, Rank realized that man does not require experts to further acculturate and collectivize him. The mind and its content is a private affair and just because a man knows himself, he may not take it that he knows others. Even if he can know the mind of others, he doesn't have the right to intrude into another person's private space, even if the person wants and permits it. Most importantly, psychoanalysis was not the creation of Sigmund Freud, nor was the theory of the unconscious. The term "unconscious" was originated by Schelling, whose ideas on the psyche and on dreams presaged Freud, Jung, Rank, and every other popularizer of the subject of psychology. That few modern scholars acknowledge this fact does not make it less true. A reading of the monumental work *Philosophy of the Unconscious,* by Eduard Von Hartmann (a book read by Freud, Jung and most European intellectuals at the time), confirms our point.

Rank's Will Psychology enabled him to account for pathology differently than Freud, Adler and Jung. Their "neurotic" type was not Rank's neurotic type. If someone displayed strange atavistic thinking, and if their dreams betrayed violent or rebellious tendencies, it was simply a sign of regression from the religious to the sexual or presexual phases of development. If a patient said he was "hearing voices," or feeling as if God were talking directly to him, or if he were on some bizarre quest which must not be prevented, Rank would not consider him mad or necessarily dangerous. If he preferred the company of animals, and said he was no longer interested in his wife, in sex, in his job, and wanted to go live as a member of a tribe or commune he'd read about, Rank would think it perfectly normal. If an entire generation starts wearing flowers in their hair, listening to music with tribal-type rhythms, and seeking for peaceful havens beyond the confines of the patriarchy, he'd say it was to be expected.

And if he saw that men throughout the world were working to destroy their ancestral roots, happy to live in sterile communities of concrete, glass and steel, he'd know why. If he saw that man's ecocidal treatment of the Umwelt brought about universal disaster, he'd say it was inevitable. If he saw that man's itchy finger was on the button of atomic war, he wouldn't be unduly phased. Like Blake, he would have realized the whys and wherefores of it all, and know there was no alternative. It is a symptom of being directed from the outside rather than from the inside. After the sexual age commenced, it was not a man's dreams that guided his behavior, but external authorities. His guarantee of immortality was no longer personal, and his every deed was subject to scrutiny. He didn't act freely because he felt he was being continually watched. If he died that day, it was not because of a malevolent spirit or spiteful ancestor, but because of his own actions. He had failed or broken a taboo and would suffer God's wrath. He would die and burn in everlasting hell, all because of his own moral laxity and sinfulness. Rank, like Blake before him, did not expect sane secure societies to come into being at the hands of men in this existential condition. Blake understood that once the inner connection is lost, once one's dreams no longer infuse and animate the world, man is lost. Everything he turns his hand to will be corrupt. And as for the natural world it stands silent and inhospitable. Because it is no longer the place where dreams are heroically reenacted, it has lost its meaning for man. After the sexual age commenced it became a resource to be plundered and exploited ad infinitum. Search as a man might in nature, he will not be able to reclaim the lost paradise. Nature is not in itself that halcyon bower. That was and is to be found within. Therefore in Blake's view the man who attempts to sanctify nature without first sanctifying his own being, is wasting his time. Nature will not provide him with what he desires. And his relationship with nature cannot be anything but dysfunctional. He is bound to be the master, and nature the slave.



An image from one of William Blake's Prophetic Books, *Milton: A Poem.* The image depicts the Four Zoas or autonomous beings into which the archetypal Anthropos Albion divides after his fall.

In his book *The Four Zoas,* Blake describes how Albion – the once complete man or Anthropos – falls into the creation smashing himself on the rocks of the material world. He fragments into four hemispheres which further subdivide. In the end Albion divides into sixteen separate hemispheres. This division of man's being is, according to Rank's theories, the result of the projection outward of the dream world and Double. The latter morphed into the tribal shaman and priest, and then into the spirit or son of God directing them. Under these exalted omniscient deities or *authorities,* man exists as a relatively insignificant creature. He loses touch with the Will as it expresses itself on its purest and most imminent level. As a result his natural habitat is desacralized and disenchanted. Man himself becomes little more than a compliant docile mannequin thinking and acting at the behest of supernaturalized entities. Once he has thus spiritually disempowered himself he soon becomes the victim of other mundane authorities who further enslave his body and mind. Consequently, his culture and inner being are impoverished and divorced. Such a man might find refuge by becoming neurotic in the classical sense. Rank knew this was an individual's belated attempt to

retreat from the sordid vapid world which attempts to crush his spirit.

The projection outwards is of apocalyptic proportions, since it includes not only the present phase of consciousness but also the two prior stages. That is, the culture man constructs bears the signs and contours of the sexual and presexual ages. As said, the Double eventually manifests in God and his representatives, and the dream world likewise becomes externalized and diminished. As Rank said, dreams are now thought of merely as sensual epiphenomena, or the result of repression and wish-fulfillment. Their source is thought to be the world as lately conceived and constructed by man. They are symptoms of our anxieties which stand in the way of our efficiency and contentment. Instead of the counsel of the Double we have the analyst and psychiatrist to tell us what is appropriate and condoned, and what is deviant and taboo. Before we heed the dream or let it be, we doubt and scrutinize it suspiciously with the expectation that it signifies something taboo to consciousness and society. We do not see the dream as being an expression and emanation of a quite legitimate originary kind of consciousness undergirding the dominant form operating in closer proximity to the world. We don't recognize that our dreams call us back to Self-dialogue and Self-direction.

Blake saw that the self-eviscerated creature who has neurotically emptied himself out into the Mitwelt (or culture), cannot possibly penetrate the mysteries of being. He can't discover the underlying truths about nature and man. This is because his instruction in all matters, moral and intellectual, comes from without, from other people or from some scientific or supernatural source. Blake understood that a man in this predicament can only bring ruin to himself and his world. Instead of his own dreams nourishing his psyche, he becomes addicted to the life-stories and fictional creations of other people, to movies and television programs that imagistically replicate and finally replace the idiographic workings of his own Imagination.

The logo of the DreamWorks film company. Rank would have found this to be a most suggestive and appropriate image and title. After all, what is more natural to us than Imagination, the capacity to spontaneously form images? Thought itself does not originate with words and language but with images. The Imagination is therefore fundamental to what it means to be *human.* Images constitute our original way of perceiving and conceiving. Whatever we grasp, be it external or internal, is by way of the Imagination. However, the unfettered natural flow of images is impeded if we lose connection to the dream state and allow the images from external minds to exclusively fascinate and preoccupy our attention. For Blake the world was led astray by the false words in the Book of John: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." In fact *images* not words are the primary creative force behind world and man. As Confucius said: *signs and symbols control the world, not phrases and laws.*

The divorce from the authentic inner dream world means that man is disconnected from his Will as it operates on the most intimate level. Man's culture is certainly a manifestation of the Will which knows only how to act. But as we pointed out in Chapter One, alongside the Will and the fear that partly constitutes it is the *aesthetic sensibility* that also serves to shape character and culture. To Blake, Rilke, Holderlin, Wordsworth, Schelling and Heidegger, the beauty of the world is also a constituent of the Will. They would not agree with Rank that the Will's activity is merely a means to reduce fear of death. This is because although dreams can indeed be thought of as more activity or more *living,* the beauty often found in a dream, like that perceived in nature, need not be a factor. It is an inexplicable extra and as such is not an invention of the Will, although it may be adopted and utilized by the Will as it births cultural idioms such as art and music, etc. And given that beauty is not a creation of human beings, nor an invention of the pragmatic Will, we see that it stands both as an affirmation of deeper mystery and as an inspiring goad to search for it.

After all, as we have suggested, Schelling might have asked Rank to account for the origin of the Umwelt, or of nature which causes the fear that causes the Will. He would certainly not accept that our fear of nature is the originary foundation of existence, even though it has spurred the Will to produce much of what constitutes our lives. He would not agree that nature's beauty, majesty and tranquility simply exists to quieten frightened minds. That kind of reductionism is unworthy of intellects as perceptive as Ranks. Schelling's argument to the average atheist might have been put best in the twentieth century, by Wittgenstein, who remarked "It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it (the world) exists." If we fail, therefore, to grasp the full potential and rationale for human existence, it is simply because we are as yet spiritually infantile and fearful of nature's mystery. We moved too quickly away from the core of ourselves, and developed unsustainable systems and paradigms that oppress, disorient and subvert the Will. The "mind-forged manacles," as Blake called them, must be removed and the oppressive leviathans of Church and State overthrown if we are to reawaken the vitality of our Imaginations and once more authentically commune with the natural world around us. Until that time, to banish feelings of inferiority, man will continue to heed his Father's directives and eagerly exorcise his repressed need for control by way of nature and its innocent creatures. In the end, after man has irrationally and insensitively "murdered to dissect" and reduced his world to ashes, he will finally discover, once and for all, whether it was the fear of nature or the love of its beauty that brought his Will and consciousness into existence.

> *We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals* –
> Immanuel Kant

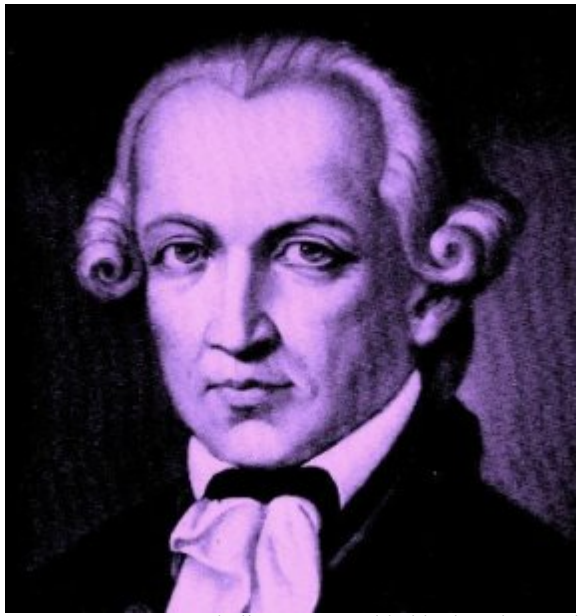
CHAPTER SIX
Nothing Higher Than Beauty

> *...the knower in Kant's system never "sees" reality as it is, but "sees" it as organized by the knower's own innate categories of the mind...Kant agreed that we could never know reality (the thing in itself) but argued that the obstacle to knowledge is the person. We come with an internal filter that admits some perceptions, rejects others, and orders and evaluates those it does admit* – Carol Ochs (*Behind the Sex of God*)

A top philosopher once said that what we see when we look at the world is not the world as it truly is, but the world as it appears as a representation or mentally contrived image.

The philosopher in question was Immanuel Kant, and he labored to show that the human mind cannot know the "real" world regardless of how intelligent and probing it is. A real world and its varied content certainly exists, he said, but what things are *in themselves* remains unknowable and inconceivable because of the mind's own circuitry and abilities. What our perceptions and conceptions give us is therefore only a copy of sorts and not the original. True, from our copy we are able to surmise that an original must somewhere or somehow exist. What is more, a wise man also deduces that by knowing everything there is to know about the copy, he comes as close as he is able to the original. But as William Blake said, such a man might eventually concede that conscious, intellectual "knowing" isn't enough, and that *feeling* plays an equally, if not more important, part in discerning the underlying reality of Self and world.

Whereas Kant's epistemological analysis shocks and depresses most people, Kant's own attitude to the dilemma he so brilliantly explained was optimistic and curious. Not knowing the original only means we should observe what we have with exceptional interest and perceptiveness. We need to know the copy inside out, because in doing so we come as near as is possible to that ultimately screened-off original. It is a great project, but not one of interest to religious types who, for the most part, prefer to remain focused on their ideas about the elusive original. In doing so, and by remaining hyper-fixated on what can never under any circumstances be known, the average religious type prevents progress both for himself and the culture of which he is a part.



Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Schelling was troubled by his ideas and sought to expand them and come up with alternative explanations concerning the mysteries of being, thought, freedom and morality.

The religious type is also likely to accept Kant's suggested resolution to the epistemological dilemma. He may accept that the way to the door of the unknowable – or *noumenal,* as Kant called it – is solely through faith and belief. The diplomatic Kant was perfectly alright with people who chose to take this route. He was a champion of free will and did not object to those who choose faith over fact, particularly if this leads them to live moral lives. The downside is that belief in God does not rationally explain God's nature. After all, if as Christians believe, man is made in the image of God, then God must resemble man in certain ways. This leads us to ask whether God has similar mental architecture as man, namely Kant's categories of understanding. If so, is God aware only of a copy of reality? Does he apprehend reality via superimpositions of time, space and causality? If so, does he doubt the reality he experiences in a similar way as men doubt theirs? And if God is, as Kant suggested, beyond time and space, how is he the cause of the world? How did he bring man into existence, and why? If God is the elusive *thing in itself,* why did he create a world of phenomenal beings doomed to remain unable to know or even conceive of anything but the reality that appears to them? The traditional atheistic answer is that God does not exist. Being a figment of human imagination, we can dispense with God and explain the universe and man's existence in materialistic terms. Men have direct access to reality as it is, and as such are able to scientifically uncover the essence of it.

Of course this conjecture has long been proven false.

As one of the world's greatest philosophers, Kant certainly understood that philosophically-minded people are inclined to take a very different path than the average atheist or religious type. The intelligent man uses his mind to observe and analyze *itself,* in every way possible, especially since man is the one being in the world capable of undertaking such a valuable exercise. Strange as it is to say, by observing the nature of the human mind, Kant was able to see that our mental copy, when all is said and done, is more important than the ever elusive original. After all the copy is *all we have,* and as such must be given priority. True, if we focus only on the original, on the remote and unknowable, we must certainly make room for faith and belief. But, as Schelling knew, once our attention shifts to the details of the copy, something truly profound happens, and faith is no longer required. Moreover, the copy reveals not only the mysteries of mental functions and competence, but also the existence and workings of nature which precedes and contains minds and bodies. Therefore, again, although we may not be able to conceive of what things truly are "in themselves," we do know them as they appear to us, and knowing that these appearances may be fractionally close to the original, they are valued and investigated accordingly, thereby leading to certain knowledge of Self *and* Nature.

To get this far one must not take either the religious or atheistic path, which lead only to illusion and contradiction. Of course one can warm themselves by belief and faith for a time, but because these finally prove inadequate, the discerning person must, as Kant well knew, return to the door of knowledge, partial as it certainly is when it comes to knowing *things in themselves.* The intelligent person realizes that even partial knowledge of a thing is better than no knowledge at all. By faith and belief man does not progress. Those who adopt this mentality are likely to presume that Kant meant them to get nearer to what cannot be proved intellectually or rationally, when he craftily meant them to discover the inadequacy of everything except knowledge. And as Schelling knew, once we have even partial knowledge of a thing, we establish that thing's existence and by so doing faith and belief are not required. Indeed faith and belief are unable to establish the existence of anything, which is why they have no place in philosophy. Since our own existence and identity is not established by way of faith and belief, but by knowledge, we are bound to reject anything not confirmable by empirical and rational knowledge.

Interestingly and significantly, the mental categories that afford us

knowledge do not bar us from extensive knowledge of their structure, or of ourselves and the world in which we live. And since knowledge comes to us by way of our "transcendental" cognitive frames, we need not be so niggardly as to suppose that the categories of time, space and causality are the only ones that exist or can exist. By way of Kant's philosophical project, we acknowledge the limits of reason but also the possibility of transcending those limits. The existence of the categories proves an underlying cause for them, which having given rise to our perceptual and conceptual proclivities – and thereby to what we presently experience and know – is theoretically capable of enhancing our mental capacities in ways as yet inconceivable. Even if we are fated to remain ignorant of nature's essence, might we not learn more about the categories of human understanding? Might we not come upon enhanced ways of understanding our understanding of what there is to be understood? And should not this capacity for Self-apprehension be the main focus of our thought, given that it not only provides us with knowledge both of humanity and nature, but serves to nucleate Cartesian presumptions of duality?

What is beauty?

The mind not only exists in nature, but requires the background of the natural world in order to objectify and know itself for what it is. The mind's subjectivity finds identity through its objectification in nature. This much was asserted by Schelling and Hegel, who made this symbiosis between mind and matter the foundation of their philosophical projects. In doing so, they were able to cogently expand on the ideas of Kant. For Schelling, nature provides us with the "mirror" by which we become conscious and Self-directing. In this way there can be no question of hard dualism in the Kantian and Cartesian sense. By way of the intimate relationship and constant interactivity of

mind and matter, we come upon the identity of that which animates both mind and nature, that is the Will. From Schelling's and Hegel's philosophies concerning the importance of nature, we see the spuriousness of Oriental traditions which seek to deny the reality of the material world. The Eastern mind tends to cast the world in an inferior light, as if it is an intrinsically base prison of the soul. Such ideas, however much harped upon, are utterly baseless and unsound. The same is true of religious notions which contend that only in a non-material, supernatural or heavenly dimension, are things truly and completely knowable. As Kant showed, this is not rational, because man can know nothing of such a world, and, likewise, from such a world nothing of our reality could be known. It follows that the fruits of knowledge are plucked and consumed nowhere but here and now, and with mental propensities perfected and applicable in a world experienced here and now. Although incarnate minds superimpose their structure on the world of nature, in the way explained by Kant, the latter must not only exist, but be receptive to those frames if knowledge of Self and nature is to be availed, as indeed it is. If nature did not incorporate forms of mind, mind itself would collapse into non-being. Therefore, minds not only depend upon the mirror of nature, but could not exist without nature. It follows that nature is not a simple passive material artifact. On the contrary, the person who lethargically deems nature to be other than creative and Willful is bound to objectify it and regard it as a foreign unkindred phenomenon, not to be revered and heeded but dominated and quelled. The Oriental, as we said, denigrates the material world of which he is a part, unaware of what this negation means for his understanding of being, freedom and culture. Even in the West many people treat nature as some kind of giant theme-park or frightening nuisance.

When we carefully and precisely examine the copy – or the reality as our minds perceive and conceive it – we quickly discern the main apparent difference between ourselves and the world in which we live, a difference that preoccupied Kant and many other epistemologists. Nature operates according to fixed rules and laws that are unchanging and unchangeable. Man, on the other hand, exercises free will and can choose to do, think and be, or not to do, think and be. Man is perpetually choosing what he thinks and does. Indeed, free will is what man essentially is. Because of free will a man can choose to live virtuously or immorally. That man is essentially a free moral being told Kant something more. It told him that the free world of mind cannot be identical to the fixed world in which our bodies exist. The physical world of scientifically understood fixed laws is, for Kant,

not the same as the *mental* and moral world experienced strictly by human beings. The essence of this world – existing behind man's freedom – is, like the essence of external reality ultimately unknowable, he says, being also part of the "noumenal" dimension permanently and irrevocably screened off from consciousness. We see that Kant introduced a dualism into his philosophy, which makes him, as Heidegger rightly noted, an ontologist and not simply an epistemologist.

Kant concedes that to know the limits of knowledge we must first attain a valuable kind of knowledge. But how is that possible, asked Schelling, who was uncomfortable with elements of Kant's thought. He was not ready to accept that *things in themselves* are wholly unknowable, or that the moral world is ultimately dissimilar to the natural world. He realized that in order to have knowledge of any kind, one must first have experienced – on a non-conscious level – an intimate communion with nature, which every newborn, initially non-self-conscious child eventually finds awaiting him. This truism helped Schelling deconstruct Kant's apparently unshakable ideas on the noumenon and *things in themselves*.

Kant concedes that close analysis of the "copy-world" reveals the intimate connections between Eigenwelt and Umwelt. The so-called objective world is articulated to the Will-world or subjective world. Man is not, as the Bible says, therefore secondary to the natural world of fixed laws which allegedly came first. On the contrary, it is man's existence as a free Willing being that determines the fixed laws of nature. If man was anything other than a free being, the natural world with its laws of necessity would either not exist or not be known to exist. In other words, it is the existence and presence of human Will that activates the laws of necessity. These laws in turn perpetuate, strengthen and undergird human Will. It is therefore a mental fiction to regard mental and physical worlds as set off against each other as if the twain have no common ground. For Schelling this was where Kant's ideas are less coherent and accurate. It is also incorrect to think of nature preceding consciousness. Nature's very contribution to consciousness proves this to be a fallacy. Certainly nature precedes every individual born into it, but it does not precede the consciousness of a child who comes to acknowledge nature only after becoming *Self-aware*. For Schelling this primordial connectivity and relationship is overlooked by philosophers and scientists who put the emphasis on human consciousness and Will, thereby relegating nature to a subservient position. For Schelling nature was there at the birth of Self-consciousness and remains in unison with the Will only to be occluded by the anti-natural influence of malignant culture. As he so

perceptively wrote: *Nature is visible Spirit, and Spirit is invisible Nature.*

What we consider the natural world is to be understood as an emanation of the supernal Will which sets nature's apparently antithetical laws in motion, a Will that also exists in human form. For Schelling, human Will permeates and constitutes the universe and its ordinances. And since, as Kant before him surmised, the world we know is so to speak a copy or mental representation, we are mistaken to think of it as a purely objective reality. Even though things exist in their own right, we are simply unable to know them as they are. According to Kant, we know, and can only know, the world as it appears to us, but for Schelling we are also able to understand that the world is constituted by the same Will which constitutes the Self. In other words, for Schelling the Self is an amalgam – part natural Will, part human Will. In this sense man and world exist and move by way of the same law – the law of Free Will. Consequently determinism is largely an illusion caused when man ignorantly conceives of a universe without Will. It amounts to the same thing as conceiving of a person without Will. This aberrant kind of thinking, that denudes and misrepresents reality, is the symptom of a malignant culture. It serves only to dissociate man from the roots of being. Wiser men understand that the Will or consciousness of nature is simply a different version of that embodied by man, and that it is the Will – the true Kantian "thing in itself" – that *precedes* both man and nature.

We see now why the young Schelling could not accept that Kant's noumenal dimension was entirely unknowable. He understood that man's essence is freedom and Will, but wanted to show that human Will was itself an emanation of God's Will. Given that nature and the human Will are so intimately related and interlocked, why do we think of nature and man as essentially different? This is a fallacy that leads to confusion and alienation. Moreover, why are we unable to see that the human Will, which requires nature to properly form and operate, is itself an emanation of a higher creative Will? If man's Will crosses the boundary between the mental and physical, thereby nucleating duality, why can it not also serve to span the gap between the mental and spiritual? If man's Will is an embodiment and emanation of God's Will, then we have a direct route to the noumenal, and do know something about it. Even if the essence of God remains partially unknowable, at least we know that God exists. He exists as the supernal, archetypal Will, the blueprint behind both nature and the human Will. Moreover, given this fact we must as humans affirm our implicit unity with God by living virtuous lives. Kant was as adamant as Schelling on this point. The *human* Will is not of human origin, but is patterned upon a supernal order or Logos identical with

what religious men call God. But to truly know and serve God we must actively choose to live in an orderly manner, that is we must consciously embody the Logos (or God's Will) by living morally. Doing so positively affects both culture and Self. Conversely, to not live morally is to covet social disaster and psychological ruin.

Alvin Boyd Kuhn (1880-1963) was the protege of the great Egyptologist and etymologist Gerald Massey. An expert on Astro-Theology, religion and Kantian philosophy, his monumental work *The Ultimate Canon of Knowledge,* explains how Kant's seminal ideas have been misinterpreted. Kuhn also reveals in detail the spuriousness and falsity of Oriental beliefs about reality, being and creation.

We see that man cannot therefore be *first* in the chain of being because without nature he cannot become a Self-aware being. Likewise nature cannot be first by the fact that it reflects and reinforces human Will. To do so means that Will must have constituted nature. Logically it follows that Will is *first.* And since Will does not originate in man or nature, we can appropriately identify it with God. We can, as Kant said, know nothing of God as he is in himself – that is we can know nothing of the Will as it is in itself, only as it expresses itself in man and nature. For Schelling this was more than enough to be getting on with. The fact that Will expresses itself at all was of paramount importance and all that mattered to him, and via the imagination we can certainly speculate about the nature of the supernal Will. However "knowing" the Will in its original form is impossible and our limits in this regard should not therefore perplex and trouble man. Man *himself* embodies the Will and must, as the ancient dictum of Delphi advises, seek to "Know Himself." As far as Schelling was concerned reason is but one way we know ourselves,

but is not the means by which we fathom the unconscious. Something more was required for that, which is why Schelling, like Blake, was a great advocate of Imagination and Art.

Having established a cogent proof for God's existence, we have no problem following Schelling and positing God as the author or ground of nature. Given that his Will manifests in human beings as mind, and freedom of thought and action, it also manifests in nature as the laws of necessity that yield to and facilitate human Will. For Schelling it is in this way that God, Man and Nature are entwined and interdependent. In this sense the laws of necessity are not antithetical to human Will, rather they are manifestations of the Will that also expresses itself through human beings. It is this supernal Will that makes it possible for humans to rise to Self-consciousness by way of the natural world. As Schelling emphasized, it is by way of nature that man knows himself as a Self.

> *...Thought only attains to consciousness when, through the mean of its externalisation into Nature, it passes from mere being-in-self to being-for-self, and having become an object to itself, has come to itself as Spirit.* – Eduard von Hartmann (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*)

The virtuous man exercises his Will knowing this fact. Otherwise his actions have meaning only for himself. The virtuous man does not regard himself as the author of Will. He knows that his thoughts are not his "creations." Thoughts awaken and pass through his being, moving back into the world from which they first came. So it is with Will. Its origins do not lie solely in the Eigenwelt or Mitwelt, but in the Umwelt which is constituted by the supernal Will that also manifests in humans, biologically and psychologically. The supernal Will is in this sense the connective tissue that holds the Eigenwelt, Mitwelt and Umwelt together.

Tomoe

The virtuous man serves as God's agent. As Hegel emphasized, man's duty is to help create the perfect culture or society, that the Geist, Spirit or Logos may be embodied and nurtured on earth. The immoral man has no such inclination. He acts without regard for virtue and thinks of nature as a lifeless or meaningless artifact which either facilitates or thwarts his hedonistic desires. If virtuous men succeed in building a virtuous culture, immorality and evil will cease to exist because hedonic men will find it impossible to achieve their ends. As a result they are eventually bound to conform to the Will of their virtuous fellows. In this way they align themselves with the Will of God which is ultimately their own Will in pure form. Whereas a hedonic person might not initially be able to discern the reason for virtue in the Umwelt (in nature), he can be taught to discern its importance by way of the Mitwelt, which is good enough.

When William Blake spoke of God, he did so in this sense. For him God was not a being, *per se,* but rather a force or everlasting active and creative Will. Unlike Schopenhauer, Blake and Schelling did not regard the Will as evil and blind. Evil is a consequence of and reaction to *cultural* malignancy. It is the condition of a hedonic Will choosing not to be virtuous. Such an infantile Will serves pragmatic ends without regard for the ultimate welfare of itself or its culture, embalming itself against any influence that stimulates independence, passion and vitality. Such a Will despises men of independence, passion and vitality, and avoids them and their works at all costs.

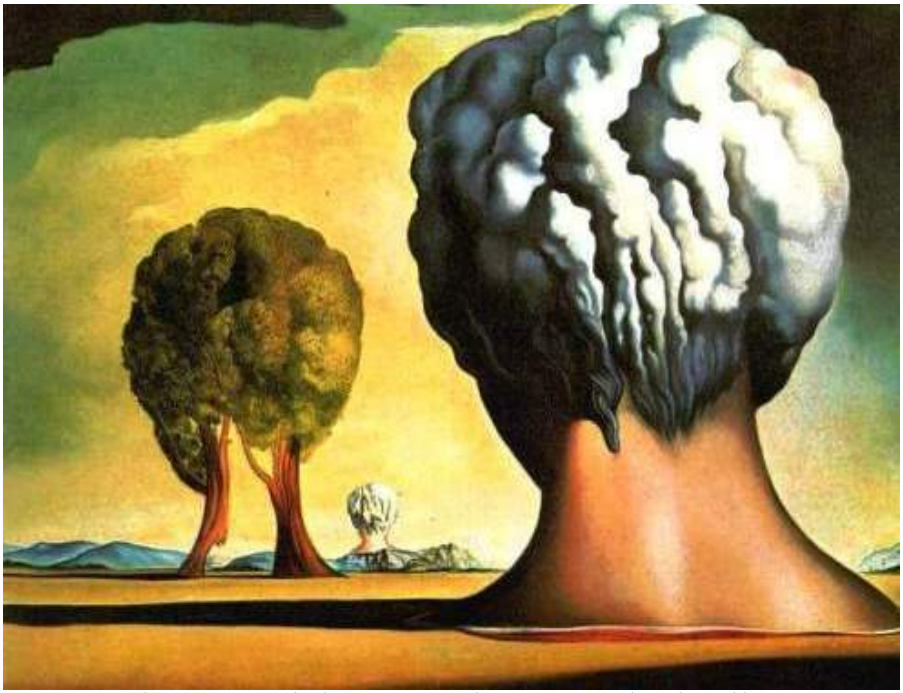
Kant saw that his main project was to understand thought and what thought was capable of understanding. Thought is a process, and as such is an expression of the supernal Will, which is capable of knowing something about its own workings. By way of Self-reflection

the Will acknowledges the existence of a non-Self or nature. Initially we tend to think of nature as something foreign and distinct. However as Schelling knew, deeper contemplation shows us that this is not so. For the Self to even recognize and interact with nature, the latter must be part of the Will. It might even be the ground of the Will and as such be nearer to the Will than God. Or it might be that the Self and nature do indeed have their ground in God, that is in the Logos or supernal Will. In this case the Will can be considered the Kantian *thing in itself,* an idea conceded by Schopenhauer:

> *For Schopenhauer, the thing-in-itself is more than a mere unknown which we posit as a limit on our knowledge. We have an intuition of it in our willing acts, for it is itself will* – Theodore Plantinga (*The Real Meaning of Kant*)

But perhaps we are not stuck with a copy of reality after all. As I write in *Disciples of the Mysterium,* the Kantian "thing in itself" might be the rationally inexplicable beauty of nature, or alternatively our capacity for the recognition of nature's beauty. That capacity constituted the human Will, which as we said must be regarded as a process rather than a thing. Nature's beauty is made apparent not only by way of Kant's categories of understanding, but by feeling. It is also something enfolded in our biology.

We grasp nature's beauty because it stands as a signature of the activity of the Will in all its forms. The grasping occurs because nature and consciousness are both manifestations of the supernal Will. In this sense the human Will's recognition of nature's beauty is nothing less than a recognition of its own existence, movement and history. After all it was not our own conscious will that activated itself. It was the unconscious Will that contains within itself the impulse for Self-objectification. After we become Self-conscious beings our tendency is to take credit for our awareness of Self. We forget that the act of becoming Self-conscious was not volitional. It occurred due to a fundamental ontological propensity of Will that precedes Self-consciousness. Since nature comes online, as it were, at the same instant we as Self-conscious beings come online, nature and Self are twins. Before the intrusion of culture we do not normally think of the natural world as separate and antagonistic to the Self.



No other person need educate us as to the existence and quality of beauty. Beauty is therefore an affirmation of Personalism and Individualism. Beauty is the term we use to explain moments when human Will recognizes its counterpart in nature. External beauty speaks to the beauty within, which resonates with the beauty without. As long as humans are capable of awing nature's beauty, sanity and civilization are guaranteed. However, once that sensibility is eroded, man as a Self exists no more. Art is our means of preserving and enhancing this invaluable ability.

More importantly, the Will as *Order* is the origin of the faculties of understanding, that is of time, space and causality. These three are indeed categories of the mind and frames by which reality is constituted. But their origin is the Logos or supernal Will. The Will's recognition of its intimate kindredness with nature is experienced by way of our innate recognition and awe of beauty. This act of the Will nucleates duality, since the recognizer is the subject and the recognized is nature. One is born from the other, both formed with the DNA, so to speak, of the supernal Will.

> *Schelling was among the first to dissolve the subject-object dichotomy calling for a philosophy of Identity between absolute subjectivity and absolute objectivity: nature and mind were identical* – Jon Mills (*The Unconscious Abyss*)

Dualism ends the moment we realize that we are nature perceiving, appreciating and *Willing* itself. In this sense, beauty is Kant's elusive *thing in itself,* given that we understand it as a process rather than an entity. Kant's error was to think of "things in themselves" as beyond time and space. As Heidegger was to show, and as Schelling apparently already understood, there can be nothing outside of time and space. There can be nothing beyond *Being.* Therefore, it follows that beauty and our natural untutored appreciation of it are not phenomena *beyond* time and space. On the contrary, they are implicit to time and space, because all four – being, nature, time and space – are constituted by Will. They are the means by which the Will, as Nature and Self relates with itself. Again, since man is not the author of nature or its beauty, or of his awe of nature, there must be something more vast and mysterious than man and his mind. Kant held the opinion that this Numina was unknowable. Schelling on the other hand believed it is knowable to an extent. Man has arisen from this Numina, but since nothing higher than man exists it follows that the Numina or Logos is embodied in man and the culture he gives rise to. It does not exist supernaturally. Again, the Numina is in this sense the Will. If something "higher" exists, and if we must entertain this concept and term, we do so agreeing with Blake that the higher is the Imagination by which these subtle truths about our intimate connection with nature are revealed. But given that Imagination is another word for the Will in action, it is ultimately not correct to think of the process as something superordinate and bestowed. As Blake emphasized, it is more correct to regard the Will or Imagination

as the essence of the Human. At least this attitude does not lead us to denigrate and subordinate man to a presence or entity above him. It leads only to reverence toward something *within* him that makes him what he is.

If one falsely situates our capacity for the appreciation of beauty from the time we become *conscious,* then beauty and its appreciation would not qualify as the Kantian *thing in itself*. But beauty and its appreciation do not originate with conscious thought. As said, beauty exists implicitly at the earliest stages of being, given that beauty as geometrical *Order* constitutes both our physical body and mental capacities and categories. So it is not as Kant thought, that time screens us off from the thing in itself. The latter is part of time and exists in time, and cannot be otherwise. This is consistent with Heidegger's ideas on being and time. Therefore one must know time, or – as Heidegger states it – one must *be* a temporal being in order to know beauty. Being, time and beauty are indissolubly interconnected phenomena, which is why Heidegger openly stated that philosophy must give way to Art.

True, the beauty which partly constitutes the Will, like the fear of nature which also constitutes it, can lead one to falsely conceive of a "higher" reality than natural perceivable reality. But that is an illusion which arises for men after they give rise to culture and forget how they do so. Man's culture takes on a life of its own, and is considered greater or "higher" than the individual. Despite the warnings of Blake, Rank, and men of their perceptive kind, this delusion persists in unthinking types who soon take the next step and conceive of supernatural realities peopled by creative, immortal, all-knowing beings. Of course we see that these entities are merely projections of human minds, traits and cultures. The conception of supernatural reality is an unfortunate consequence both of our awe of nature and fear of its corrosive and destructive power. Until we remember what we are doing, and return to a phenomenological attentiveness to the human and natural, we will not raise ourselves up from the subordinate positions into which we have fallen by positing the supernatural.

Man condemns and enslaves himself by positing the supernatural. Pathologically infected with Mysteria, he erects the hierarchies preventing him from discovering the truth about himself and his world. As Blake knew, religion confounds man's understanding of being by positioning supernatural forces and entities – such as God – *above* his station. For Blake this is the ultimate evil.

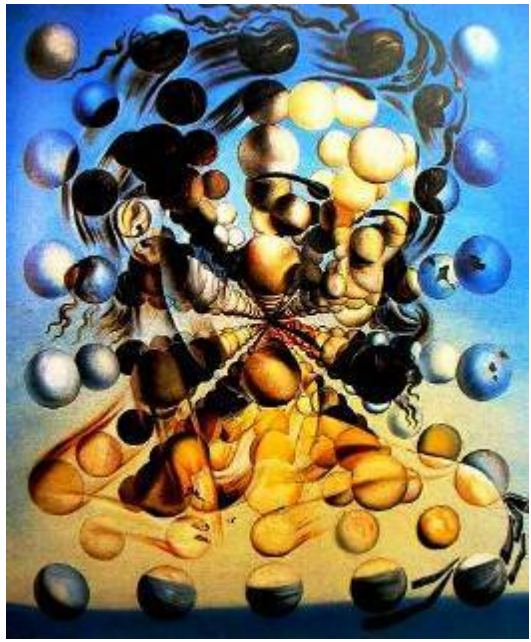
The appreciation of beauty not only gave rise to culture and metaphysical thought, it gave rise to science. As we pointed out in *Disciples of the Mysterium,* our appreciation of nature's mysterious beauty led to curiosity, which in turn led to deeper study of the world around us. The capacities for awe and wonder lie at the root of curiosity and science, but their root is nature's beauty. When, as scientists, we learn this or that truth about the perceived world, it always entails a moment of greater *Self-understanding,* given that the ground of the natural is within our being. The science that establishes a dualistic paradigm, and insists on man's ultimate meaninglessness, is a spurious science that has strayed far from its roots. This was Blake's great worry. As far as he was concerned, science was always secondary to Art, since the latter must by definition remain closer to the beauty not only as it exists in nature, but in man. The Will and Imagination work through man's consciousness, and by exalting himself, man sacralizes his Will and Imagination, as well as the beauty that gave them birth. Consequently, what goes on within man is of primary importance. The beauty that underlies identity might even lead to deeper realities and truths. And since process is vital, man must endeavor to create continually if he wishes to have greater vision and insight. Despite appearances, it is the Artist who is generally more aware than the scientist of the necessity of movement, development, renewal, attentiveness and Self-awareness. The Artist is more aware of the unconscious processes within him which are often occluded and stifled by the world of other men, that is by culture. Whereas the

scientist's worth is rarely doubted and opposed, the Artist often finds his commitment to his muse contested and thwarted by the world and malignant will of other men, or in Blake's terminology, by those "Newtons" who have lost their way and shackled their creative genius. The culture which focuses primarily on the Mitwelt – or Collective – no longer relates ethically with nature and the man of Imagination. Within such a culture the creative man is bound to become alienated and disenchanted. Like Blake, such a man soon turns his artistic skill to transgress society's antihuman standards and expose the sterility of "Single Vision."

The wise Artist, committed to eternal vision and process, realizing that Will and Imagination constitute both world and Self, lives in a perpetual state of intellectual and emotional beginning. In this way he is, in the language of Schelling, Godly:

> *God then has no beginning only insofar as there is no beginning of his beginning. The beginning in God is eternal beginning, that is, such a one as was beginning from all eternity, and still is, and also never ceases to be beginning* – Schelling

After all, what is Art but a process that is, like the mind of man, in constant Self-renewal. Past and future are in this context mental fictions or conveniences. They are thought of as "time" but this is not what they are. Time is a being – a Will – in the act of Self-creation. But the Artist is *himself* an act of creation. He is the Will's creation – God's creation if you like, as long as we understand that God is, as Blake and Schelling knew, not a thing but the ever active Will. Man rises to the status of Artist because he is himself a form of artistry. And as such he commits utterly to this own acts of creation. So it was for Blake, Rilke, Holderlin, Cocteau, Heidegger, and others of their kind. The Artist's prose, painting, photography, poetry, music, drama, sculpture and architecture enhance culture, inspiring others after him to carry on the process by which humans enrich their experience of life. Infused with beauty the Artist finds himself impelled to pass the ecstatic experience on to his brothers and sisters in the world, that they too may feel elevated and encouraged to consciously deepen and intensify their experience, or as Blake said, to open the doors of perception and see heaven in a wild flower.



Schelling understood that the supernal Will that polarizes *and* emanates both as nature and Self-consciousness is not a *thing* but an active process. As such, the Will does not inhabit a place set off above this world because it is the world or the universe teleologically unfolding in what we conceive of as time and space. They are the means by which we perceive and conceive of the supernal Will in its natural and human forms. Schelling did not accept Kant's epistemological dilemma, to think of God (or the supernal Will) as a wholly unknowable phenomenon. For Schelling it was inconceivable that God would design creation and consciousness this way, permanently screening himself off from man. He is manifested in or as Nature, Being, Will, Freedom, Virtue and Art, each expressions of the Logos which creates and animates all things. Certainly much of the activity of the Logos or Will is unknown, but the essentials of what Will is are knowable and experienceable. They manifest in the human domain – in culture – when and if men decide to live virtuously. In this way, and only in this way, is God consciously made manifest, and the world – the Umwelt and Mitwelt – brought into alignment with God's Will.

Eternity is in love with the products of time – William Blake

Therefore, crucially for Schelling, we are wrong to consider Kant's thing in itself as a thing. It is in every sense a process both spiritual and material. Moreover, in this context, Schelling believed that God was *always* a beginning or occurence, a perpetual originating force

that always and forever recreates itself and everything else anew. Nothing that exists, exists in stasis, and nothing actually ends. This too is an illusion. At every stage, microscopically and macroscopically, a thing is, either consciously or unconsciously, in the process of renewing its identity. The so-called beginning of anything stands before us. To know anything is to know it as it begins anew moment to moment. We never encounter something that ends. We cannot know that death actually *ends* a being's existence. That is beyond our ability to confirm. We see a bodily form decay and apparently cease functioning as we expect, but have no way of knowing whether the dead have simply begun some new incomprehensible mode of existence. In fact, despite their physical disappearance, a person's death *is* a beginning, since that is all a thing, or Will, is and can be. For example, if we focus exclusively on a leaf, insect or cell, we see that as time passes they apparently die. But when we pull back to include and examine their environment, we see that their individual deaths are instrumental to the latter's continued existence. Death then is entirely a matter of perspective. If an atheist prefers to think of death as a final ending, he's free to do so. His perspective denies man's role in the greater scheme of things. It denies the nature of the everlasting Will by focusing on the vessel through which it temporarily operates. As Blake emphasized, such a perspective is due to the fallacies, or Mysteria, instilled by the "Satanic Mills" of education and religion.

> *History as a whole is a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the Absolute* – Schelling

So is it with God. His elusive beginning or ground is conceivable after all. It is, so to speak, an eternal all-inclusive beingness and becoming of which space and time – the categories of consciousness – permit only an indistinct understanding. Nature too is an all-embracing constant beginning. The question of what came *before* God and nature is therefore ultimately meaningless. For perpetual being there can be neither past nor origin. In a sense, art is man's attempt to stand still and preserve one moment of realization or being. However, a man can never cease being an Artist, because no single artifact suffices to define or encapsulate what he experiences and is.

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) conceived Process Philosophy, based largely on the ideas of Schelling. Some modern scientists are quietly incorporating the ideas of the two men into their own work, without clearly referencing their monumental contributions to science and philosophy. Recent Quantum Scientists, Religious Naturalists and Naturalistic Pantheists repackage the ideas of these great men often without due credit. Like Heraclitus of old, Schelling and Whitehead rejected the notion of God as a being or thing. "He" is, on the contrary, a vital process – or *elan vital* – which we thoughtlessly and habitually personify. Although the atheist is bound to correctly point out the spuriousness of this humanization, he needlessly rejects the existence of God. His rejection is untenable, being merely a reaction to an obvious fallacy. The scientist will never "prove" the existence of God, because existence itself is God. Therefore, the existing being requires no further "proof" of God's existence than his own existence. Seen through the mental frames of time and space, we experience the Will (or God) only as a temporary presence. It is only with the eye of Imagination that we grasp more of the Will's essence as it moves through us and the universe in the form of bioenergy, thought, feeling and creativity.

As far as modern science is concerned, Kant was right. Apparently there are limits to what consciousnesses is capable of knowing. We cannot penetrate into the mystery of the so-called Quantum Universe, and the core functioning of nature does seem to be screened off from our minds. Nature's workings are changed by our attempts to objectively observe them. Well, this predicament simply confirms that human Will and natural Will do interact, as Blake, Schelling and Whitehead maintained. But because of this predicament, we are compelled to understand that we have already been given by nature

all that is required for us to be and know who we are. And by finding out who we are, we automatically discover what nature is. In Kantian terms, the supposed mental apparatus that screens us from the *things in themselves,* does not inhibit us from knowing *ourselves,* and by so doing knowing all. We are bound to place in focus that which we are able to know and *feel* about nature and the human world, even if we are restricted to a copy-world. This presents us with no problem once we realize, like Kant, that the copy is more important to us than the original. Once this seemingly paradoxical idea is grasped, and our understanding of our condition correctly adjusted, we cease trying to "objectively" observe nature's Will, and focus instead on our own. This in turn means we must understand the limits of reason and turn to Art – to Imagination, aesthetics and feeling.

Problematically, because of culture we falsely imagine that, ontologically-speaking, Selves come first. We forget than in order to become conscious Selves we must, as Schelling understood, first have interacted with nature's Will, for it is by way of nature's Will that our own Will is kindled and ignited. Because this interactivity is so subliminal and primordial, and because after birth we are so quickly embedded in our manic *humanized* culture, we forget about the manner in which we become Selves, and our recognition of nature's role in that process is egregiously diffused. Realizing this travesty, Blake insisted that man turn to Art, that he might reawaken his bond with nature and the supernal Will, thereby reinforcing his Imagination and personal Will. He warned that a spiritless culture of virtueless men is bound to subvert an individual's Imagination and oppress his Will. In such a culture, art is for the most part without meaning. So-called artistic creations tend to be facile comedic doodles made to entertain and titillate the senses.

The communion between Wills – Supernal, Natural and Human – is in Blake's words "Eternal Delight." But the state fades when we intellectualize it. Indeed, many a scientist has been forced by circumstance to accept this fact and acknowledge it on the institutional level. As Arthur Koestler, Richard Tarnas, Rupert Sheldrake, and others have shown, even top materialistic scientists admit that many of their most significant insights came to them spontaneously from their imaginations. Confessions of this sort support the Blakean idea that man is here not to reason and intellectualize as much as he is to Imagine, Create, Feel and Be.

As far as Blake was concerned, the *modus operandi* of reason is to reveal falsities so the truth of a matter stands forth. He wished not only to show the spuriousness and danger of ideas concerning gods

and supernatural realms, but that there is nothing "higher" than man, except the Logos or order of nature, an order that interlocks with human minds (or Imaginations) so intimately that it might be referred to as the *human* order as much as a natural order.

Without nature, man cannot be man. He cannot be conscious enough to know himself as a Self, or to create a culture. We may walk a little way with Kant and admit that a great deal of what makes us Self-conscious beings remains unknowable, but we part company when we grasp that it is a part of the Self that he considers "noumenal." We also differ from Kant after we realize that nature comes online for us the moment we become Self-aware. This makes man and nature identical twins. If we ask about the parent, we agree with Rank and Schelling. It is Will, Logos or Spirit.

Hypothetically speaking, if science had succeeded in proving the existence of a supernatural reality, for Blake it would have been disastrous, given that man would continue being cast in a subordinate position in relation to it. Once we falsely conceive of reality as having a *separate* identity and existence from that of our minds, problems begin. The essence of nature must by dint of this falsity be different from the essence of consciousness. In this way dualism is born and until the underlying fallacy is revealed and denied, as it was by Blake and Schelling, it cannot be overcome. The mystery of how minds and

matter interrelate is bound to remain insoluble.

Blake, Hegel, Schelling and Heidegger each understood that there is no need to place supernatural realities above the human station. But it was Schelling who first insisted that being cannot be rationally and intellectually probed to its core. What individuals make of this truism is their own affair. Some people might chafe at this fact, becoming skeptical and dismissive, while others may commit to the Blakean project and become Artists in the authentic sense. If one wishes to be truly and completely *human,* this is the only course rationally worth committing to. It is the course that God and Nature are already and everlastingly on, and so to avoid this road is to forgo knowing and *experiencing* God, Nature *and* Self as they truly and eternally are.

CHAPTER SEVEN
The Absolute Idealism of Hegel

Only one man ever understood me, and he didn't understand me – Georg Hegel

Hegel didn't speak about the so-called "unconscious" in as much depth as his one time friend Schelling. He certainly recognized the unconscious as a vitally important factor in the advent of consciousness, but felt that our primary focus should be on the knowable and rational. With this in mind he set about refuting Kant's skeptical philosophy which emphasized the permanent limits of consciousness. In fact, the philosophical projects of the three great German Idealists – Fichte, Schelling and Hegel – were attempts to refute Kant's main epistemological and metaphysical ideas concerning consciousness, nature and God.

As far as Hegel was concerned, nothing that really matters about reality (about being, God and nature) is permanently and irrevocably hidden from us. There is no concealer or concealed. What a mind does not know at a given point in history will be known down the line, when the time and faculties are right. Like Schelling, Hegel held that mind itself – and the very existence of consciousness – is itself proof of God's existence. Of course a close reading of Hegel's main works shows us that the God he speaks of does not resemble the God of Christianity. Although he was canny enough to employ familiar Christian terminology, Hegel can be described loosely as an Immanentist or Pandeist – one who believes that although the entire creation is God, God is also a being unto himself. However, like Schelling he correctly regarded God not a being *per se,* but as a process that unfolds in a rational or logical manner. He also believed that this ever-expanding evolution of being occurred to humans as well as to God, and that the process is empirically comprehensible. Indeed, for both Hegel and Schelling reason is not only the process itself, but the means by which we understand the process.

Reason does not have the idea of God, it is the idea, and nothing else – Schelling

The reason Hegel believed that we can know all there is to know about reality is because he understood that the mind is not only a peculiar phenomenon but a powerful one. To uncover what thought itself is, and what it is capable of, is to come upon the Absolute Truth.

For Hegel Truth was found in one place only, namely the mind itself. It is literally the process of understanding the understanding. Our comprehension of mind from the *inside* leads us to know the reason for the existence of "Geist" or mind and its endeavors. By way of this insight into the structure or "Logic" of the mind we come upon the Truth of all reality. Consequently we see the reason for a philosophy of Idealism, which holds that all reality is mental, or in Hegel's language *Idea.*

The three great German Idealists: Johann Fichte (1762-1814), Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854) and Georg Hegel (1770-1831). Schelling's work is all but forgotten and Hegel was the single most misinterpreted philosopher who ever lived. Each man set out in their youth to refute the skeptical philosophy of their great German predecessor Immanuel Kant. Schelling and Hegel succeeded in the enterprise and brought the world untold wisdom concerning being, identity, consciousness, nature, desire, time, ethics, culture, aesthetics and God.

Idealism of this sort had been succinctly advocated by the Irish philosopher Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753). For Berkeley, apparently physical objects exist not as material but *ideal* substances. Their physicality is a manifestation of minds which perceive and regard objects as external. After this habitual but unfortunate reduction and atomization, our minds attribute spurious attributes and origins to apparently externalized objects. This falsity of perception is the cause of philosophical materialism, which is according to Berkeley an utterly unsustainable view of reality. He insisted that reality in all its forms is *perceived* or mental reality. Unfortunately, perception permits us to erroneously think of one thing as mental and another as material. But in truth all reality is spiritual or mental, with mind being the fundamental criteria and ground of all perception. Consciousness is the means by which reality is perceived and conceived. This is because the very act of objectification that allows external objects to appear external is a *mental* act. The act of objectification isn't brought about by the world or the objects in it. Rather it is an inherent capacity of mind. Perception and conception are themselves capacities of consciousness and not the result of the supposedly external material world. Perceived objects are real because they are perceived, and have no stand-alone identity beyond being perceived. Since perception

relies on consciousness, so do things perceived.

Of course we also believe that our bodies are the result of the supposedly material world of nature. But we are deceived in both notions. Our "material" bodies are as much objects as any other in the world, and therefore the same Berkelean law applies. Both the body *and* the world are *ideas.* They are both the result of mental acts of objectification. This is the ultimate reason for the inaccuracy of talk about *subjects* and *objects* that several philosophers have attempted to explain or refute.

This Idealistic philosophy accounts for why we apparently have no certain knowledge of the Self as Self, and why the core identity of Self remains an enigma. This is because the act of objectification has untranscendable limits. The Self's capacity to objectify itself to the point where it can view itself completely from the "outside," as it were, is understandably restricted.

According to the Idealism of Berkeley and Hegel, what we know of the Self is known by way of a living, active world wrongly considered separate to Self. Once reality in its totality is understood as identical with the Self, we realize that we do possess knowledge of Self. That knowledge is, however, of a vaster kind than we suppose. This is because our comprehension of what a Self is supposed to be is from the outset erroneous and limited, thanks to a malignant culture which has – by way of false science and religion – systematically dehumanized and desacralized the individual.

Discovering the Truth entails understanding the structure of mind and thought, and why, as Kant first pointed out, the material world is not seen for what it is "in itself." Hegel agreed with this to a point, but corrected Kant by saying that the way the world is conceived by mind is the *only way it can and should be.* This is obviously because mind is the prime organizer of the things it surveys. Without a mind to perceive and conceive there is no question of an external reality. It is by way of mind that external objects appear to us. These objects have no existence "in themselves," and to speak of such an idea leads us nowhere. Their existence and chief meaning is in their phenomenological appearance to each and every beholding mind. Observing what consciousness does with this worldly content is the philosophical work of central importance. Additionally, mind is not inherently distorting or misreading what it perceives, but is seeing and knowing the world and its variegated content in the only way it can be seen and known. Crucially, Hegel stressed that any mental act of perception and conception happens for a specific purpose, namely

Self-realization. What we call reality is the act of a mind in the process of *Self-discovery*. And given that this process occurs, moment by moment, day by day, year by year, and is empirically verifiable to each and every person engaged in it, it is both rational and real. Nothing whatsoever is gained or furthered by doubting the matter in a Kantian manner.

Of course the mind is quite aware that it is frequently misled about certain perceptions, and being aware of its imperfections rightly seeks certainty. But in regards its knowledge of itself, the mind seeks and finds not certainty but *Truth*. To prove his point about Absolute Truth Hegel pointed out that when we seek to learn something about the instrument of understanding – the mind – we are bound to use that same instrument to do so. The mysteries of mind are the subject of that same mind. In philosophical language the subject is its own object. And this seeming paradox must, said Hegel, remain at the forefront of a philosopher's consciousness. What does it tell us? Does it mean we are trapped inside the cage of mind with no escape? No, said Hegel. It means that the sole concern of metaphysics is mind. Hence the importance of the philosophy of Idealism. And since this strange process of mind understanding mind does have a denouement – a point and definite conclusion – Hegel chose to name his philosophy "Absolute Idealism."

To explain the paradox of a mind's ability to Self-reflexively investigate itself and all it surveys, Hegel showed that a mind's investigation of itself not only reveals its underlying structure but leads to a cogent and irrefutable proof of God's existence, given that we acknowledge Hegel's God as different in kind to that presented by the great religions.

The mind, as we said, surveys the objects of the world and knows them for what they are. In other words, the world is formed in the mind of man by the mind of man. In this sense the mind is Kant's "thing in itself," and is therefore quite *knowable*. When mind turns from the external world to fathom its own nature, something profound occurs, and it was Hegel's intention to explain throughout his works what incredible secrets and truths about physical and metaphysical realities come forth when mind rationally analyzes its own origins and nature.

The first revelation occurs when mind discovers its cognitive limits. These are not however Kantian limits, but ones that are discernible and breakable. In any case the mind discovers that it does not possess complete knowledge of a thing on its first encounter. It does not know

all there is to know about any external object right off the bat. The same fact applies when mind examines itself. In short, the mind's first vitally important discovery about itself concerns its inherent *inadequacy*. It thereafter becomes aware of its resistance to its limitation, a resistance that spurs it onward to know more about worldly objects and its own capacity. Hegel brilliantly defines the restless and incessant progress of the mind as "sublation," that is the *negation of negation*. In simple terms, the mind ever desires to overcome its inadequacy. We know this process of willfulness and desire as time and history.

The mind soon comes to realize that its inadequacy is not overcome after a single act of knowledge. The inadequacy persists and must be lessened through the passage of time. It is with time and experience that our knowledge of Self and world increases. And so the mind acknowledges reality as the consequence of a process to which it is wholly committed. In other words, as Heidegger later emphasized, time is *identical* to mind and being. It is the essence of Reason and Truth, Truth being nothing less than the mind's discovery of its own fundamental workings. As the miraculous Self-discovery continues, mind sees that the central reason for the process is *Self-knowledge*. Once this is understood we see that there can be no question of the outer world being regarded as separate and distinct from the inner mental world. There is no question of unknowability in either physical or mental terms. All that is experienced in time and space is consequential to the deepening through time of the Self's awareness of itself. Every experience and relationship is instrumental to sublation and Self-discovery. This is why Hegel was contemptuous of Kant's contradictory ideas of a noumenal realm. That realm, should it exist, has nothing whatever to do with Truth or reality. It has no relevance to the central matters of being. All experience is about knowing oneself as one is and as one becomes through life, not knowing some utterly removed supersensible realm which in its inconceivability becomes the object of faith rather than of reason and empirical knowledge.

The Truth is not revealed by theories of this kind. The Truth is an active movement of mind in a world of ever-changing entities and objects recognized, organized and improved by a mind already set in motion by its restless quest for further knowledge about itself. If the process comes to an end, which Hegel believed it did, it does so when the mind arrives at complete Self-knowledge, which in turn means it simultaneously possesses complete knowledge of the essence of all reality. At that moment Self, Nature and God are forever united. At that stage a new kind of life begins that cannot possibly be

comprehended or explained prior to it becoming a reality.

As we've seen, for Schelling and Hegel one of the central mysteries of philosophy was how consciousness arose from the ground of unconsciousness. They were also fascinated by how Self-consciousness arose out of consciousness. This mystery was always at the forefront of their minds. Most of the animals in the world are conscious without being Self-conscious. All newborn babies are conscious before becoming Self-conscious, and during sleep we are all conscious without being Self-conscious. When the mind progresses in Self-understanding it comes to see the miracle and mystery of the advent of Self-consciousness. Hegel understood that although consciousness originally arises because our encounter with *ourselves,* it is enhanced by way of our encounter with other Self-conscious beings. And so in the great journey a mind undertakes to understand itself, the existence of other people and the vital importance of culture enter into the picture. Of course the golden rule still applies. We are not capable of knowing everything there is to know about another person upon a first encounter. Time is again required. And the central matter also applies – in knowing the other, I come to know more about *myself.*

Hegel labored to point out that early on in history and the mind's investigation of itself, the other person is irrationally objectified and not regarded as instrumental in the process of Self-knowledge. Both parties are inclined to approach each other with hostility and fear. At this stage we have what Hegel termed the "Master versus Slave" relationship. Eventually this tense, mutually negating dynamic, will be overcome, but only when each party realizes the cardinal rule – namely that each discovers more about *themselves* by experiencing the other. Hegel's perfect state, or more correctly *culture,* is made up of people who have this cardinal rule firmly in mind from childhood on. When each individual is endowed with this revelation – the understanding that each encounter assists them in Self-discovery – they will not be inclined to see the other as a threat or an enemy. When one nation no longer sees their neighboring nation as a threat or enemy, peace and camaraderie is assured. No flags, peace-treaties or gods are needed for this denouement. The mind's own understanding of itself is all that is required. Truth wins the day and alienation on personal and social levels ceases.

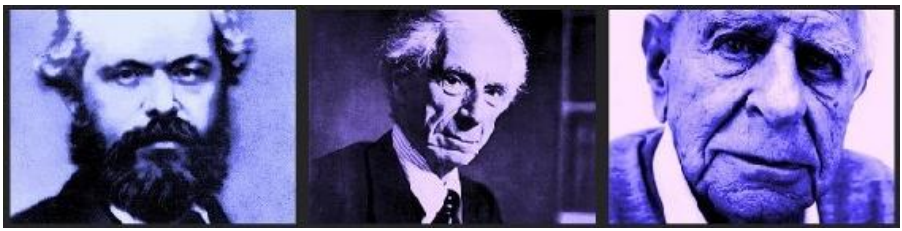
> *I have my self-consciousness not in myself but in the other. I am satisfied and have peace with myself only in this other and I AM only because I have peace with myself...This other, because it likewise exists outside itself, has its self-consciousness only in me; and both the other and I are only this consciousness of being-*

outside-ourselves and of our identity; we are only this intuition, feeling, and knowledge of our unity. This is love, and without knowing that love is both a distinguishing and the sublation of this distinction, one speaks emptily of it – Hegel

Hegel in his professor's attire. He was one of only a few professionally academic philosophers. The majority of the greats we associate with philosophy worked in unrelated fields. The British neo-Hegelians who continued the Idealist tradition were Josiah Royce, Bernard Bosanquet, Francis H. Bradley and John McTaggart. We cannot assume these men, competent as they were, correctly interpreted Hegel's philosophy in every respect.

So for Hegel the process of Truth or Logic can be subdivided into three general stages. The origin of the process we call mind (the word *mind* is not a noun but a verb), begins with the first Truth, namely that mind is inadequate in its understanding of Self and world. The second Truth is that mind must endeavor to overcome or negate its cognitive limitations. This is accomplished through time and experience. By grasping nature and the objects of the world, and by absorbing them according to the implicit need for Self-discovery, mind knows an object by taking it into itself. (Mind is transcendent and can do what no object can.) In this way knowledge or Truth involves a "metaphysical" nucleation or transcendence of subject and object. Next, the mind discovers that Self-consciousness largely depends upon the encounter and correct assessment of the existence of other Self-conscious beings in cultural settings. Naturally, the development of a healthy culture implies virtue and morality. No man must set himself

up above another, and no man must be content to blindly serve others. He must not misuse his ontological freedom in this way. The result of the unresolved Master-Slave relationship is individual and social ruin. Next, after the establishment of a harmonious culture, newborn individuals quickly learn to relate appropriately with one another, realizing that they are each embodiments of freedom and Truth. Each person knows themselves as living embodiments of the Logos or Geist, involved in deepening knowledge of themselves through each and every interaction. With this in mind, a man does not grow up to exploit people, animals or nature. Each entity and object is respected and regarded as part of one's being.



Karl Marx, Bertrand Russell and Karl Popper. There have been many thinkers who, for reasons best known to themselves, took pot-shots at Hegel's teachings. One can argue that entire schools of philosophy, particularly Marxism, Bertrand's Russell's Logical Positivism, J, L. Austin's Analytical Philosophy, Pragmatism and Behaviorism took birth as wrongheaded reactions to German Idealism. Hegel was vociferously ridiculed by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, James, Moore, Marcuse, and others. Today most people have a markedly false understanding of Hegel's philosophy. This is due to numerous misinterpreters, such as the early Communist-Socialist ideologues and so-called "Left Hegelians," Alexander Herzen, August Cieszkowski, Moses Hess, Edgar Bauer, Karl Koppen, Ludwig Feuerbach, Alexander Kojeve, Gaston Fessard, and most infamously of all Karl Marx. In more recent times Hegel's name and reputation has been severely compromized by Karl Popper. His scandalously biased and wholly inaccurate book *The Open Society and its Enemies,* was one of the most widely read and discussed tomes of the twentieth century. Popper disparaged Hegel as a proto-Fascist and totalitarian while he lauded Socialism. Other equally malicious and fraudulent commenters have gone to great lengths to utterly misrepresent and misconstrue Hegel's sophisticated concept of the "Dialectic," which bridges physics and metaphysics.

The final stage, for Hegel, occurs when mind discovers that the underlying Logic or rational process by which it has become Self-aware is not a pattern or system designed and embedded by itself. The three-part process outlined above is certainly mental, and constitutes "mind," but when all is said and done it did not originate with any individual consciousness. It is an ontological structure to which each and every mind is psycho-socially articulated without generally being aware of it. As Hegel rightly saw, it exists as an archetypal universal template not only within the psyche but also within nature and the cosmos. In other words, for Hegel reason is not something limited to man. On the contrary, it is the structure of *all* reality. Man's reason or

mind is but one manifestation of it. But, as Schelling had already shown, Rationality, Logic or Truth exists on the non-conscious level also. It exists in nature as well as in the human world. Consequently, it is this supernal Logic that Hegel referred to as Geist, Spirit or God, although the latter bears little similarity to the anthropomorphized imperious deity favored by irrational religious types whose knowledge of Self is non-existent.

> *We usually suppose that the Absolute must lie far beyond; but it is precisely what is wholly present, what we, as thinkers, always carry with us and employ, even though we have no express consciousness of it* – Hegel

Schelling understood that consciousness is a consequence of entelechy or deliberate becoming. Each human consciousness starts as *unconscious* being, which implies that man is not Self-willed or Self-created. If consciousness is creative, as we know it is, why do we not presume the unconscious Self to be equally creative or Willful? Given that we do presume so, we see that the unconscious Will cannot have come into existence on its own. A non-ego cannot will itself to be and cannot desire life. Even if it is active, it is a pure *arational* action without direction and Self-awareness. Therefore, asks Schelling, given that they are both active states, how did consciousness and unconsciousness come into being? The latter must be moved into activity – or created – by a rational omnipotent Willful being who has the desire to be, or who can be described as pure desire or Will. This desiring, creative being is God, Spirit or Geist, the first and foremost subject who becomes his own object in the humans he created – his mark being Will in the form not only of action, as it exists in animals, but in *desire* or *thought* as it exists in humans. The mind comprehends the inner psychic space or world, and the body which houses the mind – itself a product of the Will – moves in and comprehends the external world. However, both worlds are in this sense created by the Will. The external world of nature is, for Schelling, not a separate reality, but an emanation of consciousness. For him, and other Idealists, this is the truly sensible way to view reality.

What is the object of man's desire? As far as Hegel and Schelling were concerned, it is the same as the object desired by God – namely Self-knowledge. This desire existed from the beginning and constitutes ultimate *beginning*. If a man is asked "Who are you?" he will not automatically think of answering "I am my past." Nevertheless, this is exactly what each and every person is. An individual's past goes back not, as we might think, to the moment of his physical conception, but before that to the origin of the human race and more remotely to the

creation of the planet and the universe. The origin of the individual is, therefore, the origin of *all* that came before. It is the same for God, although God's origin is conceivably more ancient than man's. In any case, God's identity is still his past, however far back in time it stretches. Moreover, regardless of how far back God's past extends, the desire to be and know more constitutes each moment of it. In this sense, desire is the root or ground of the Will of man and God, and the reason for both consciousness and unconsciousness. Consciousness is simply another word for desire, not for things but for Self-knowledge. And underlying both desire and Will is the freedom to seek Self-knowledge. If the Will were not free to choose what to desire, desire would be pointless.

As we can see, this explains the origin and purpose of the so-called unconscious. As the "womb" of the conscious mind, it is the dark repository of forgotten as well as preconscious instances of desire. In other words it is the sum of our past. We do not consciously remember and process the innumerable stages by which we became conscious beings, and cannot consciously control and wholly process the flow of images from the unconscious. We do, however, perpetually experience images and fantasies of all kinds emanating from the psychic abyss, particularly during sleep. Although it may be *arational,* the unconscious is wrongly considered *irrational* because everything we come to know about it, everything dredged up in dreams or waking life, becomes rational in the light of consciousness. Indeed, as far as Hegel was concerned, the images and voices from the unconscious – experienced by every human regardless of caste, creed and intelligence – are far from illusory. They are evidence of another kind of thinking going on within us. They are the activity of Geist as it communicates to us in its own quiet numinous way. Similarly, our experiences in the external world are rational because they are experienced, organized and *improved* by consciousness that does not wish to be incarcerated and limited by material reality in its many rude "non-ideal" forms.

And when it comes to the all-important reality of time – through which Spirit becomes objectified soul to become Spirit again – we conceive of a future because we wish to be and know more about ourselves in it. Our desire to be something other than we are is made today, but becomes a desire of the past as we move forward to attain what we desire to be in the future. The future is where we again plant another seed of desire to be something else down the line. In time we become the beings we are, but in time we also constantly change the beings we are. It can be said, therefore, that we are, like God, pure Will and desire. Theoretically speaking, for the process of desire to

end we would have to cease desiring to be other than we are at a given moment of our personal chronology. We continue living, but do so as eternal beings no longer bound by time.

The essence of Hegel's philosophy is grasped when we realize that the world before us is not simply made up of independent subjects and objects. True, by way of our five senses we find before us a multiplicity of objects and entities with which we relate as Self-conscious, observing subjects. That much is not doubted. However, despite our precious Self-consciousness and ability to objectively observe the world, we rarely focus on the complex and innumerable *relations* that exist between particulars. We prefer to view our world as being made up of relatively static, stand-alone objects, and do not normally focus on the vital, active exchanges between them. In the vein of French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty we might say that each object before us – a cup, table, vase or lamp – in its corporeality is actually a *perspective.* Not merely something seen, it can be said to "see" in its own right. Phenomenologically speaking, objects and their environment make up a universe that is essentially an infinite sets of changing perspectives. In other words, each thing that exists does not exist in a vacuum. An object makes sense, so to speak, because it *shares* a living world with other kindred objects that are parts of its body and world. The sunlight falling on a vase, revealing its form, beauty or ugliness and changes over time, and the dust that gathers on it, are *part* of the vase, part of the reality it experiences as a non-conscious but existent object. In this way we see that the identity of each object is in large part determined by its context within an energetic matrix of perspectives. Reciprocally, the object in question is part of the context for other objects within that same matrix. However, each particular does not itself determine the context in which it stands and of which it is an integral part. It is the universe in totality that provides the context in which things find themselves. That wider universe containing objects and entities is not empirically perceived as an object, though it is conceived as one. Nevertheless, the universe is empirically recognized as an infinite set of evolving, changing *relationships.* In one sense that is what each entity and object truly is – a perspective on all that exists around it; each thing making each other thing what it is. If enough times passes, our vase turns to dust, dust that falls on another object occupying the vicinity in which it once stood.

Self-conscious humans are a locus point among the innumerable relationships that occur. The human is the place it all comes together. But no human mind is capable of consciously grasping each and every relationship between particulars that has existed through time to the

present moment. That is beyond our capability. Nevertheless, we can be aware of a great deal of these relationships and interactions, should we turn attention to them. Indeed, it is the unique propensity of Self-consciousness to do so. However, this level of awareness is impossible to activate as long as we remain embalmed in our own subjectivity, unable see that the definiteness of our Self-consciousness all too often obscures the sense of our existential condition and place among the stuff of the world, which, as said, imparts to us *our* identity.

This deeper capacity for seeing the world and our place in it is an ambient awareness akin to that of God. In fact, the crux of the matter is that this level of awareness *is* God. In this interstitial envisioning we share God's view of reality, remembering that it is God alone who comprehends the entirety of infinite relationships and exchanges existing between entities and objects. Happening within the "body" of God they are empirical rather than abstract occurrences. In other words, phenomenologically speaking, God is a *way of seeing.* As William Blake would certainly have emphasized, that kind of vision is achieved by humans via the Imagination. It is Blake's Fourfold Vision that transcends the narrow, sterile Single Vision of the scientist, rationalist and deist.

As far as Hegel was concerned, it is therefore correct to understand God as the *process* we know as the universe, and also as the Self-conscious super-perspective that encompasses and preserves in memory each and every stage and interaction along the way. All of these ever-morphing relationships or perspectives make up our universe and reality. What is more, at each stage of the endless process we have perfection. But although the supervening stage is a stage in perfection, so was the stage before. Perfection is found at each temporal stage, from the first to the last. The visible universe can be described as perfection perfecting itself. As said previously, this perfection is rightly understood as Order and Beauty. Traditionally, we conceive of this perfection as God. However, this is not the God of religion, who stands perfect and static from the start. This is a God who, having no beginning, is engaged and ever actively present not *in* the process but *as* the process. It is the inadequately static picture of God instilled in us by dogmatic religion that prevents us seeing the nature of God as it truly is. Said clearly, God is not an entity at all, but a Self-comprehending *process.* God, Spirit or Geist is the totality of relationships that constitute the process. God is the freedom that lies at the base of the process, making it possible. God is not an entity inhabiting a remote supernatural domain, because God is the present moment and everything that led to it. God is the Self-consciousness that has arisen by way of the process we call Universe. We are the

process's creation, and experience the movement of the process as nature, time, history and consciousness. As Bohme, Blake, Schelling, Hegel and Whitehead understood, humans, as Self-conscious beings, are the means by which the process – the Geist – comprehends itself.

For Hegel the truly rational man is one who understands that he embodies God and nature both. He realizes that the process his mind undergoes in time to arrive at complete Self-consciousness makes him an embodiment of God. It is the process God undertakes himself. Indeed it is the process by which God becomes Self-realized via nature and man. For this reason Hegel understood God as being identical with the natural and human worlds. This is not Pantheism in the traditional sense, nor is it Theim in the traditional sense. Empirically based, it is more a kind of Innatism, Rational Mysticism, Mystical Naturalism or Process Theology, in the sense understood by Holderlin, Rilke, Blake, Schelling, Whitehead, and others. It isn't religion because the God of which Hegel speaks is certainly not to be considered a static being complete in himself from the start. "He" is an active force or process perceived as nature and human history. In his original undivided Self-sufficient state God's omnipotence was not fully experienced. To be fully Self-realized God moved to project a measure of his power outward to finite being. Divine power – Spirit – was thereby individualized and objectified in forms without inherent power, i.e., souls, selves, egos, bodies. Nature and humanity embody this measure of divine potency, and by way of these two vessels or mirrors God is able to know himself for the being he truly is.

Nature and humanity are not, however, passive mirrors. Infused with the light and power of the divine they come to realize their own spiritual potency. Man is moved by Geist to create rational virtuous cultures which embody Spirit in material affairs. Crucially, the sane man does not conceive of himself or God as static, and is consequently wedded to the process of Self-realization and enhanced mental and moral sophistication. Man actively does as God does by infusing his earthly creations with the measure of rational divinity in his keeping. The sacred infuses his works of art and is correctly transmitted, via culture, to the generations which follow. A wise sacred culture does not exploit nature or men, and does not inflict atrocities on the creatures of the world – the dutiful custodians of the ecosphere made by Spirit. Blood never flows in the name of belief, tradition or sensual satiation. The individual raised to honor God does not dirty his own Spirit, or that of God, in this dastardly immoral behavior, thereby alienating himself forever from the effulgence of the divine spark within.

When total Self-consciousness is attained nature is seen for what it truly is – the theater in which Spirit in human form realizes its true power and character – the means by which minds arose from unconsciousness to consciousness and from there to the peak of absolute Self-realization. Nature (or Umwelt) is therefore, as Schelling maintained, very much part of the human process, and must be regarded as an indispensable part of Spirit.

> *Soon the contempt with which only the ignorant still look down on everything physical will cease and once again the following saying will be true: the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone* – Schelling

> *Just as our one body is composed of many members which are held together by one soul, so I think that the universe ought to be thought of as an immense, complex organism held together by the power and reason (logos) of God as by a single soul* – Origen

Undergirding the mind and its journey toward Self-realization is freedom. But for Hegel, freedom becomes vastly more important and valuable when actively applied in human culture. It is certainly the foundation of man's individuality and will to exist, but when freedom is acknowledged as a Godly phenomenon by Self-conscious moral and cultured beings, the unfolding and manifestation of Geist is truly made Rational and time can be said to have served its purpose. The rest is Eternity.

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